

THE TIMES



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TODAY

COMEBACK FOR THE FOURTH TENOR

Roberto Alagna's return

PLUS: 32 pages of HOUSE STYLE



MOTHER-IN-LAW: HARRIDAN-OR ALLY?

WEEKEND PAGE 11



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LEIGH GREEN

Central Office divided on tactics

Major takes command for the last week

By ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN MAJOR has taken personal control of the Conservative election campaign amid overtures of a serious split over tactics at Central Office.

Tory officials have confirmed that the Prime Minister is virtually running the operation from Downing Street and his battle bus. The tension at the top of the leadership over strategy has exposed a serious rift among senior Conservative advisers over whether Europe or the economy should have been made the party's dominant campaign theme.

Mr Major, with Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, and Lord Saatchi, its advertising chief, overruled other key strategists by putting the main emphasis on Europe. Their victory was reflected in last night's party election broadcast when Europe was again a main issue. The Prime Minister, to the consternation of some of his advisers, has insisted that the European Union should be a central plank of the campaign next week.

The disagreements reflect a deepening sense of frustration at Central Office over the failure to dent Labour's lead in the opinion polls. They have prompted senior party officials openly to contemplate defeat and speculate on the size of the Labour majority.

Supporters of Mr Major are complaining bitterly that people are already positioning

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themselves to ensure they are not blamed in the inquest that would follow a heavy defeat.

And yesterday Norma Major resigned from the election fray after her husband encountered an exuberant crowd of Bangladeshis in the East End of London. She was briefly cornered against railings before bodyguards came to her rescue. An hour later, as Mr Major again mingled with boisterous supporters in nearby Ilford, his wife avoided the scrum and walked alone through the town's pedestrian precinct.

In the tension over the campaign strategy, it is the decision to rip up the strategy and go on the offensive over Europe that is the clearest illustration of the way Mr Major, backed by Lord Saatchi and Viscount Cranborne, his Downing Street chief of staff, has taken the campaign by the scruff of the neck. It also confirmed suspicions that the chain of command could become blurred between Mr Major and Lord

Cranborne and Central Office and Lord Saatchi.

Danny Finkelstein, head of the Conservative research department, and David Willets, chairman, argued strongly last week that the economy should be the battleground. "Deep down people still do not trust Labour on tax," one senior Tory official said. "We should have been hitting them hard on the subject. Europe can prove too divisive."

Mr Major and Dr Mawhinney have not always agreed. It was Mr Major who rejected a re-run of the Tories' "demon eyes" campaign against Tony Blair. Plans were drawn up and they were enthusiastically backed by Lord Saatchi, Sir Tim Bell and Lord Chaddington, the former Peter Gummer. "Some of our best work has never seen the light of the campaign. We boasted last year that demon eyes was the most effective ad we had done for years, so why wasn't it repeated?" a senior party official asked.

The "New Labour New Danger" slogan, which was unveiled with a flourish last year, has been unofficially buried. Ministers were primed to ram home the message at press conferences and in media interviews. But the expression is rarely used amid disagreements over whether the message was confused.

"We were trying to say new Labour was old, the same old danger, but that was not what the slogan said," the Tory source added.

Even the latest poster, "Britain is Booming", has its critics at Downing Street and among some of Mr Major's senior ministers. "When people see 'boom', they automatically think of bust," a senior Tory said. On Wednesday night, the Prime Minister asserted his authority once more when he overruled Lord Saatchi, who wanted the go-ahead for a big newspaper advertising campaign in the last few days of the campaign. Dr Mawhinney agreed with Lord Saatchi.

Dr Mawhinney has seemed increasingly ill at ease with a role he never sought and which his critics say he is not suited to. He has only a walking role at the daily press conferences.

He knows his weaknesses and he has refrained from too many high-profile media appearances. "But it hurts" one of his friends said. "He knows full well he will be blamed if we lose."

He knows his weaknesses and he has refrained from too many high-profile media appearances. "But it hurts" one of his friends said. "He knows full well he will be blamed if we lose."

Continued on page 2, col 5

say that the ground across large areas of southern and eastern England is now drier than during the drought of 1976 and reservoir levels have, for the first time this year, begun to fall.

Yesterday's downpours, which are forecast to last into Monday, disrupted many County Cricket championship matches.

There was no play at Old Trafford in the match between Lancashire and Durham, nor at Trent Bridge between Nottinghamshire and Worcestershire.

Drivers were warned to take extra care as the rain mixed with rubber, oil and dust to create slippery conditions.

Although the unsettled weather is forecast to persist across most of Britain, experts said the rain would do

little to boost reservoirs, rivers and underground supplies. A spokesman for the Environment Agency said yesterday that they had detected the first fall in reservoir levels after the winter recharge period.

Reservoirs across England and Wales were 90 per cent full on April 17. They have dipped slightly to 88 per cent capacity as demand rises. In the South West and Yorkshire levels are at 70 per cent of capacity.

Scientists at the Institute of Hydrology in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, said the soil moisture levels in southern England are now lower than in 1976

"by a long way".

The researchers are still compiling the exact statistics but the findings are

echoed in figures released yesterday by the Environment Agency on soil moisture deficits.

These assess how dry the ground is and how much rain is needed to soak the earth sufficiently to allow rainfall to penetrate down to underground boreholes and aquifers.

Last year the deficit in the Anglian region on April 24 was 50mm but this has increased this year to 71mm of rain now. In the Thames region 32mm of rain were needed at the same time in 1996 to soak the ground sufficiently to boost underground supplies. The amount needed has risen to 85mm.

Subsidence fears, page 2
Forecast, page 26

Parched landscape receives rain at last

By NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

RAIN swept across most of Britain yesterday giving welcome relief to gardeners and farmers, especially in the South East which had its first significant fall for five weeks with four millimetres falling by late afternoon and more coming. The four millimetres compare to one to two millimetres over the past month—and a seasonal average of 5mm.

There was also heavy rain across Wales, the north Midlands and East Anglia, where farmers have been complaining about "desert" conditions.

But weeks of wet weather will be needed to end the drought. Scientists

say that the ground across large areas of southern and eastern England is now drier than during the drought of 1976 and reservoir levels have, for the first time this year, begun to fall.

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Judge attacks CWS bidder's dishonesty

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

A JUDGE in the High Court yesterday severely criticised the conduct of the 31-year-old entrepreneur Andrew Regan in his abortive £1.2 billion bid for the Co-operative Wholesale Society. Mr Justice Gavin Lightman said it represented a "serious, gross and wilful breach of confidence" and was "clearly dishonest".

The judge added: "It was inevitable that this bid would be stopped as soon as it became apparent that it was based on injurious conduct."

He ordered that CWS's legal costs be paid on a punitive "indemnity" basis by Mr Regan, his partner David Lyons, their companies Gallileo and Lanica Trust, and

Allen Green, a CWS executive suspended last week.

Mr Green has admitted passing commercially sensitive documents to Mr Regan and his associates and was videotaped doing so by a surveillance team hired by CWS. Mr Justice Lightman upheld an earlier order that none of the material obtained from Mr Green be used by Mr Regan or his associates.

Graham Melmoth, chief executive of the CWS, said yesterday that the society was determined to remain independent, adding that what had occurred "struck at the heart of the City".

Raider to pay, page 27

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Lessons for fathers in their sons' schooling

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

FATHERS must become more involved in their sons' education if the widening gender gap in examination performance is to be closed, leading teachers said yesterday.

A booklet published by the Secondary Heads Association says that boys and girls must be taught in different ways and sets out a range of options for schools, including single-sex teaching. With girls outperforming boys at every stage of schooling, the heads said at the launch of a programme to tackle the problem: "There can be no quick fixes."

Peter Downes, the retired head teacher of Hinchingbrooke School,

near John Major's home outside Huntingdon, said girls were now so far ahead that if the Prime Minister's vision of a grammar school in every town came to fruition, they would be dominated by girls. "The grammar schools would be full of girls and the secondary moderns full of boys. We would be creating ghettos."

Mr Downes, a former SHA president who wrote the booklet with an education consultant and three other head teachers, said that a typical 14-year-old boy could concentrate for four to five minutes, compared with fifteen minutes for a girl. Schools had to take account of such differences.

Mr Downes said boys required more

direct contact with the teacher and frequent testing. In his own school, their requirements were addressed seriously only when he threatened to introduce single-sex classes. He had delivered a blunt, old-fashioned message about doing better at a series of boys-only assemblies and had focused extra attention on boys who did poorly in mock examinations.

Other schools featured in the booklet, *Can boys do better?*, had tried setting short-term targets for boys, appointing pastoral assistants to identify underachievement and introducing more rewards for success.

Four schools in Devon which launched their own study of under-

achievement found that staff were not as rigorous with boys as with girls, extending deadlines for work, having lower expectations and accepting poorer behaviour and presentation. Boys gained "street-cred" by not working and could not handle praise for their work, living on a mythology that there would be jobs for them whatever their results.

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, said the poor performance of many boys was one of the most important issues for schools. The Government had introduced measures to drive up standards among low achievers, with boys in mind.

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Video camera captured neighbour who resorted to sabotage to keep up appearances

'Mrs Bucket' learns the cost of a touch of glass

By RUSSELL JENKINS

JOSEPHINE Bradbury was counting the cost of keeping up appearances yesterday after she was caught by a video camera sprinkling glass on a neighbour's driveway to deter him parking his pick-up truck in her respected street.

The whole unfortunate episode proved very trying for Bradbury, who runs the Bramhall Manor Hotel in Bramhall, Cheshire, and who — like Hyacinth Bucket (pronounced "Bucket") played by Patricia Routledge in the BBC series — wanted only to keep the neighbourhood around her guesthouse up to scratch.

Bradbury, 68, was galvanised into action when Keith Palmer, head of an engineering firm, his wife, Emma, 34, and daughter Abigail, 5, moved in to a four-bedroom detached house opposite two years ago. Bradbury thought the house was like a "transit camp with all the coming and going". In the spirit of *Keeping Up Appearances*, something drastic had to be done.

Mrs Palmer told Minshull Street Crown Court, Manchester: "The first time I came across Mrs Bradbury was when I parked my BMW in the drive to collect my house keys. She first said this was a nice area and then asked us what vehicles we drove."

"I said we had the BMW plus my husband's works truck but she said he would have to park it somewhere else because it wasn't in keeping with the area. He only ever parked it there on Sunday and that was because there was no parking restriction at that time of the week."

"Later Mrs Bradbury approached me when I went into the village and she said my roses needed pruning. She even complained to my husband about our automatic security light going on and off."

Last year the Palmers began noticing piles of glass at the spot where Mr Palmer normally parked his truck. The couple assumed children



Keith and Emma Palmer, who had a video camera installed after glass was found on their drive, below



were to blame, but became concerned when glass started appearing three or four times a week. On the advice of an environmental health officer, they set up a video camera at the upstairs bedroom window to catch the culprit. They were astonished when the video captured Mrs Bradbury, not once but twice.

"It did not occur to me at all that it was her that was doing this," Mrs Palmer said.

Judge Geake dismissed Bradbury's appeal against Stockport magistrates' verdict last December and ordered her to pay a further £124 in costs in addition to a 12-month conditional discharge and £87 costs imposed by the magistrates. Bradbury had been charged with causing a dan-



Pat "Bucket" Routledge

ger to other road users.

Dressed flamboyantly in a black suit, black hat with a blue bow tied into the back of her long brown hair, Bradbury told the court: "The

Judge Geake said: "In our experience neighbours' disputes spin over and we are quite certain there was something of a background in this case."

Mrs Palmer described the episode as dreadful and traumatic.

She said: "We had both worked hard to buy this house because we fell in love with it when we first saw it. At first we said it was the house of our dreams. We weren't banking on a nightmare neighbour."

"We felt we had to take action because people could have injured with all this broken glass lying around. I take my daughter and some of her friends to school. Anyone of them could have been cut if they fell into it. Since we reported Mrs Bradbury the glass-dropping has stopped."

Bradbury complained last night that she was pitched into the appeal hearing without adequate preparation. She claimed she had never been allowed to see the video evidence. She maintained that the allegations were "totally untrue". "Using a video, that is dodgy to say the least," she said. "I am seeking Legal Aid to pursue a case for damages."

Bradbury added: "Quite frankly, when the police turned up I thought they were joke policemen, like something out of a Jeremy Beadle show. I didn't know anything about glass. I didn't know the Palmers and I don't want to know them. I have lost time, money and Christ knows what else. The legal system is an ass."



Video star: Josephine Bradbury, owner of the Bramall Manor Hotel, below



Right-wing magazine is racist trash, says judge

By A STAFF REPORTER

A JUDGE said yesterday that he had never felt as uncomfortable as when leaving through racist "trash" published by a defendant.

Judge Butler had asked to see a copy of *Stormer*, a magazine published by an extreme right-wing group. He said: "It's absolutely chilling. I've rarely felt more uncomfortable than sitting in this seat flicking through that trash."

The publication was one of hundreds seized by police at the home of Mark Atkinson, 31, a refuse collector, of Egham, Surrey. Judge Butler said: "My instincts tell me he should go straight into custody, but that would not be the correct judicial process." Instead, he bailed Atkinson to live at a secret address until being sentenced at the end of a co-accused's trial, which is due to start in September.

Atkinson pleaded guilty at Southwark Crown Court, south London, to publishing two issues of *Stormer*, seized last May, which were threatening, abusive and insulting, intending to stir up racial hatred or whereby racial hatred was likely to be served.

He denied two charges of conspiring with another man to distribute threatening, abusive and insulting material and possessing the material with a view to distribution.

Commuter risks prison for right to smoke on train

By ADRIAN LEE

A COMMUTER pledged to go on defying train company's smoking ban yesterday, just moments after a High Court judge ordered him to obey the rule.

Peter Boddington, 43, has flouted the policy on Connex South Central services between London and his home in Brighton for four years, and now risks jail. Outside court, he drew on a cigarette and declared that he would light up as normal, in his favourite spot in the buffet car, on his way home last night.

The French-owned train company obtained an injunction at the High Court after Mr Boddington — who owns Tooting Market in south London, where he runs a cut-price tobacco stall — refused to give up voluntarily. He is

standing for Parliament in Tooting to highlight his cause.

He is a 60-a-day smoker and gets through an average of six cigarettes on each journey. He argues that a 1962 bylaw allowing the regulation of smoking on trains was never meant to amount to a total ban.

A commuter for 25 years, Mr Boddington, a bachelor, has never held a driving licence and holds a £2,460 season ticket. Connex says the purchase of the ticket bound him to follow its rules, including the ban introduced by British Rail in 1993.

He has already been fined £10 under criminal law for breaking the ban and is appealing to the House of Lords. He was arrested again last week. He managed to endure 2½ hours in court without a cigarette, later attributing his temperance to a sore throat.

Michael Beloff, QC, for Connex, said the smoking policy was for the safety, health and convenience of other passengers. Mr Justice Ferris imposed an injunction until the House of Lords hears the criminal case.

Afterwards, Mr Boddington, supported by the smokers' group Forest, said his legal costs had reached £20,000 but he would fight on: "Whether I go to prison is up to Connex. I will carry on smoking on the train."

Boddington: candidate

Mother of disruptive boy jailed for threats

By DAVID CHARTER
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

A MOTHER whose disruptive son nearly provoked a teachers' strike was jailed for three years yesterday for threatening to kill a housing officer.

Rita Wilding, 35, mounted a terror campaign against Gerald Bunting, whom she had earlier assaulted so badly, by pushing him down stairs, that he had to retire early.

The campaign included 72 threatening telephone calls and culminated in her knocking on Mr Bunting's door and telling him: "We've come to burn you." One of her sons then sprayed Mr Bunting with what he thought was petrol, but was in fact lemonade.

Sentencing her at Nottingham Crown Court, the Recorder, Alastair MacDuff, QC, said: "You have stepped into the witness box and told breathless lies. Society must be protected from people like you."

Wilding had targeted Mr Bunting after hearing comments he made on a television programme about violent women. She blamed him for the death of her husband, Philip, 57, from a heart attack.

Teachers at Glastonbury school, Nottingham, threatened to strike last year if they were forced to teach Richard Wilding, then 13, who was expelled for violent and disruptive behaviour.

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*Source: Savings Market, Summer 1996.

Chef's ex-wife wins £10,000 for libel

By A STAFF REPORTER

KATALIN BLANC, the former wife of the chef Raymond Blanc, yesterday accepted libel damages believed to be in excess of £10,000 at the High Court. The damages follow a claim in *The Observer* that she contributed to stroke her ex-husband suffered and subjected him to constant psychoanalysis.

Mme Blanc's counsel, Rupert Elliott, told Mr Justice Morland that the article last July was based on an interview with M. Blanc, in which he spoke about the breakdown of his marriage.

He had given the interview despite the fact that he and his wife, a psychotherapist, had given court undertakings not to

discuss the topic. "The article reported certain statements made by Mr Blanc about the stroke which he had suffered in 1991 in the course of his marriage to the plaintiff, suggesting that it had been the plaintiff who had contributed to his stroke or was to blame for it," Mr Elliott said.

The article also reported comments which he made about the way in which he had been treated by the plaintiff and his allegations that she had subjected him to constant psychoanalysis.

Mr Elliott said that the article had caused Mme Blanc, of Oxford, enormous distress because she considered she had been portrayed as an insensitive woman who, through constant and obsessive

psychoanalysis of her husband, had contributed to his suffering a stroke.

"As a psychotherapist whose function

is to be sensitive and caring with her patients and discreet and confidential in relation to their affairs, she felt that these reported allegations portrayed her as a person who was wholly unfit to practise as a psychotherapist. Moreover, these allegations were, all of them, entirely untrue and have caused her considerable embarrassment both personally and professionally," Mr Elliott said.

Richard Dickinson, for *The Observer*,

said the newspaper apologised for the inferences drawn from its report. It had agreed to pay "significant" damages and Mme Blanc's legal costs.

Richard Dickinson, for *The Observer*,

Hijacked post office van used in £2m robbery

By MICHAEL HORNELL

MASKED gunmen escaped with more than £2 million after using a hijacked post office van in a "Trojan horse" raid on a Royal Mail sorting office. Police are hunting at least four men, believed to have handguns, who robbed the regional distribution depot in Redhill, Surrey.

Two employees who had been in the stolen van were kept hostage as the gang took more than 20 sacks containing cash, stamps and other items. Five other staff were forced into an office fitted with a time lock. A locksmith had to be called to free them.

The haul was driven away and transferred nearby to two white Transit vans, a white Ford Escort XR3 and an olive green Rover.

The gang had bypassed closed-circuit television cameras and coded locks. The hostages were found by police after a telephone call from a passer-by who had seen the vehicle being dumped.

Detective Superintendent Bill Harding, who is leading the inquiry, declined to say how the gang had bypassed the security systems at the depot, or whether the robbery was thought to have involved an inside accomplice.

He said: "The whole incident was over within 20 minutes. It was very quick. The two people taken hostage were extremely shaken up, but received only minor injuries after being bound. No shots were fired during the whole incident."

"Where the offenders went is not known and we are still investigating how they gained access into the sorting office. When they got into the building they threatened to shoot staff if they did not co-operate."

An incident room was set up and officers were making enquiries near where the van was dumped.

The Post Office refused to comment on the incident, but it was believed that union officials would be calling for action and an explanation as to how staff could be threatened in such an apparently secure facility.

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Pharmacists issue heart warning over second hay fever drug

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

SAFETY fears about another hay fever drug were raised yesterday after the Government's announcement that a range of popular remedies is to be made available by prescription only.

Over-the-counter sales of 11 treatments containing the drug terfenadine, including Triludan and Aller-Eze Clear, are to be banned by the Committee on Safety of Medicines because of concern about its effect on the heart.

Yesterday the Royal Pharmaceutical Society said that two other popular brands, Pollon-Eze and Hismanal, should be removed from shop shelves because they may also cause heart problems. However, the Committee on Safety of

Medicines said that astemizole, the active ingredient in the two remedies, posed a much lower risk than terfenadine.

Fourteen deaths in Britain have been associated with terfenadine since its introduction in 1982. Since 1992 users have been advised not to take it at the same time as antibiotic and antifungal medicines.

Research in America has shown that one 60mg tablet can affect the heart rhythm. The US Food and Drug Administration announced in January that it intended to withdraw approval for terfenadine after reports that it had been responsible for at least 17 deaths and 40 heart attacks there.

The Committee on Safety of Medicines will begin the consultation process for making terfenadine a prescription-only medicine on April 28. Chemists began taking the treatments off their shelves yesterday, but they will still be available on request. Two Boots

of Medicines said that terfenadine, which is 50 light years away, because it is similar to the Sun.

After monitoring it for 11 months, the team concluded that the speed varied back and forth by about 150mph over 40 days, and from that, and the star's size, they calculate the planet must be slightly more massive than Jupiter and orbits the star every 40 days.

The short orbital period means that the planet must be close to the star, about a quarter of the distance between Earth and the Sun. That in turn implies that the temperature at the surface of the planet must be about 300C.

Dr Timothy Brown, of NCAR, who designed the spectrograph, says: "All the giant planets found so far orbit Sun-like stars. Rho Coronae Borealis is another one of these, but it appears to be about ten billion years old — twice as old as the Sun."

The unsolved mystery is why such massive planets should form so close to their parent stars. Current theories of the birth of the solar system suggest that large planets could form only a long way from stars. "The whole picture of solar-system formation needs to be looked at afresh in the light of these new planet discoveries," Dr Noyes said.

Present techniques are not sophisticated enough to pick up smaller Earth-like planets, but the discovery of giant planets like this one reinforces the conviction that they must exist. "It's exciting to think that there may be many smaller planets much more like the Earth in orbit around these stars," Dr Noyes said.

Planets around distant stars cannot be seen, even with the most powerful telescope, as any light reflected from them is drowned by the much more powerful light of the star.

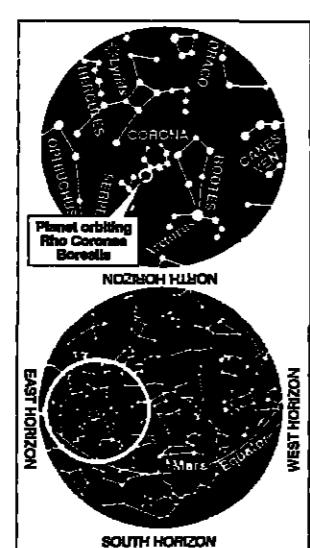


Diagram shows the night sky in the latitude of London at 21:00hrs towards the end of the month. Map should be turned so that the horizon the observer is facing is at the bottom.

Their presence must be deduced from small variations, or wobbles, in the motion of the star caused by the planet orbiting around it.

The American team, from the Smithsonian, the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado, and Pennsylvania State University, used a spectrograph mounted on a 1.5-metre telescope at the Lawrence Whipple Observatory in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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Treatments to be taken with caution

prescription, but many are available over the counter. Those based on loratadine and ceterizine do not cause drowsiness. Those that can cause drowsiness contain chlorpheniramine.

Terfenadine drugs should not be used by patients suffering from cardiac or liver disease. The recommended dose of 120mg daily in adults must be observed. Apart from not taking the drug with grapefruit juice, it should not be used at the same time as a number of antifungal or antibiotic drugs.

on Safety of Medicines said that it would keep the astemizole-based drugs under review. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society said yesterday: "We are telling our members to take charge of the sales themselves so they can advise the public of potential adverse reactions.

The hay fever season has started early this year because of the low rainfall and warm weather. The National Asthma Campaign is to open its pollen line on Monday, a month early.

The pollen count is to be updated each day at 11am, with regional and national forecasts from sampling stations across the country. The number is 0171 971 0444.

Grapefruit juice can be dangerous if taken with certain types of

own-brand products are among the II. The store has instructed staff to tell customers about the risk and to advise them to use other tablets, nasal sprays and eye drops to control symptoms.

About nine million people suffer

from pollen allergy. Dr Martin Partridge, chief medical adviser to the National Asthma Campaign, said anyone concerned about their drugs should consult their doctor or talk to their pharmacist to obtain individual advice. The Committee

on Safety of Medicines said that it would keep the astemizole-based drugs under review. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society said yesterday: "We are telling our members to take charge of the sales themselves so they can advise the public of potential adverse reactions.

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Grapefruit juice can be dangerous if taken with certain types of

drugs, including terfenadine. The discovery was made accidentally after research on drug-test volunteers in America, who were not breaking down the drugs as rapidly as was expected so too much went into the bloodstream.

The one thing the volunteers had in common was the grapefruit juice given to them for breakfast. The juice was analysed and found to contain a chemical called psoralen, not known to exist in anything else, including the whole fruit.

The chemical inhibits the enzymes in the liver and intestine, stopping them breaking down terfenadine, so that it enters the bloodstream. Terfenadine is dangerous to people with cardiac defects and high levels in the blood could kill them.

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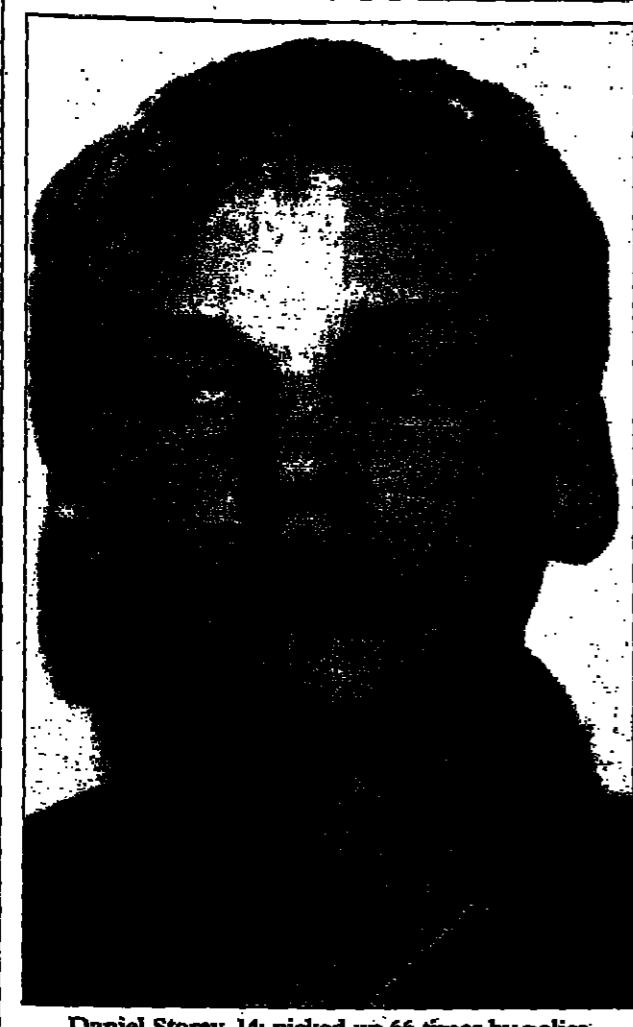
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Daniel Storey, 14: picked up 66 times by police

Teenage burglars had been arrested 155 times

By Tim Jowiss

TWO teenage burglars who targeted disabled and helpless pensioners to finance their drugs habit had been arrested 155 times as they roamed the streets of Portsmouth looking for victims.

Daniel Storey, 14, described by some of his victims as "angelic", had been picked up by police on 66 occasions in 2½ years. Daniel Marsh, 17, had been arrested 49 times over the same period.

As they pleaded guilty to charges of conspiracy to burgle and conspiracy to steal, Judge Selwood lifted the anonymity usually given to young offenders, saying their victims and the public had a right to know who had committed the crimes. He ordered them to be detained at a secure institution.

Portsmouth Crown Court was told that the pair, arrogant and beyond parental control, roamed the city's streets and supermarkets seeking opportunities to pounce on pensioners who were alone. For their burglar-

ies, they selected houses where they knew the occupants were old and weak. In just over 18 months they committed 55 thefts and burglaries. They were also linked to at least 30 thefts committed last summer in Cosham High Street when they snatched purses from elderly people.

Police following them once heard them planning to ambush an old woman who was confined to a wheelchair. Storey was heard to say to

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Mash: "We will have to wait until she is on her own so we can get closer to her."

They also strolled into a health centre and helped themselves to video equipment and cameras worth £1,700.

Another victim, James Sutton, had been out of his flat for only an hour when the pair squeezed through a small window and stole the jewellery collection he had built up with his wife. Mr Sutton, who suffers from emphysema, had recently buried his wife and was so distressed by the incident he had to spend three weeks in hospital.

He welcomed the sentence yesterday, adding: "What they did was a bitter pill for me. They also stole all my Christmas presents and wrote off the festive season for me."

He added: "I think it was right they should be named to warn people about the terrible things these youngsters do."

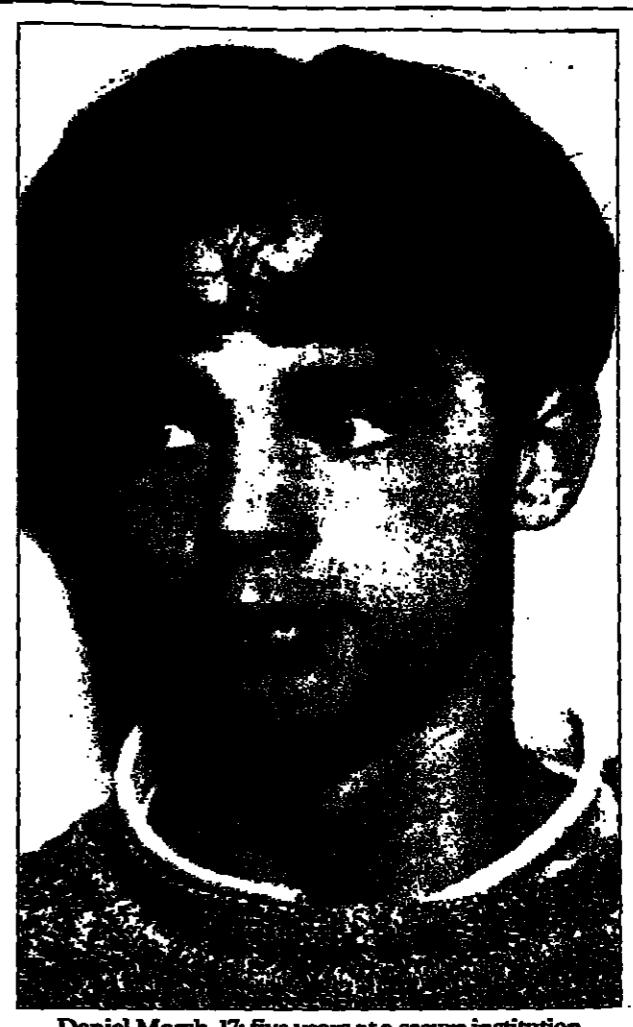
Sentencing Storey, of Fratton, to three years, and Marsh, of Buckland, to five years, the judge said: "This catalogue of offences to which

you have pleaded guilty shows a complete disregard for the public, for individuals and for the law. It is all too clear to me that on a number of occasions you chose soft targets carefully."

His decision to name the pair was welcomed by PC Rob Clarke, who led the investigation. He said: "It is about time the public were made aware of just who is behind these sorts of crimes and how young they are. In a majority of cases people don't believe how a boy as young as Storey has the gall to commit these sort of offences."

Storey's mother, Jacqueline Ogle, who wept after he was sentenced, said she had been powerless to stop him entering a life of crime. "Where we live, if you're not one of the gang you get your head kicked in. I should have been harsher on him. Naturally I blame myself."

Ben Compton, for Storey, had told the court: "His appearance belies his age. The picture is one of a young man who is completely out of control."



Daniel Marsh, 17: five years at a secure institution

Passover guests are poisoned by mousse

By RUSSELL JENKINS

THIRTY people have been struck down by food poisoning after celebrating Passover and many more cases are expected among the Jewish community in north Manchester.

The victims of the salmonella bug all come from Whitefield and attended a celebration held on Monday evening, when the eight-day festival began. Three people, including a girl aged nine, are in hospital. Four members of one family have been admitted; a woman, her father, her husband and her daughter were all in serious discomfort until they began to feel slightly better yesterday. The woman, said she was awaiting results of tests.

All are believed to have eaten a chocolate mousse served by an outside organisation and began to suffer discomfort and diarrhoea within 48 hours.

Environmental health officers at Bury Council believe that there could be as many as 400 cases. Samples are being analysed to determine the source of the outbreak.

Sugar levels not declared on most food labels

By ROBIN YOUNG

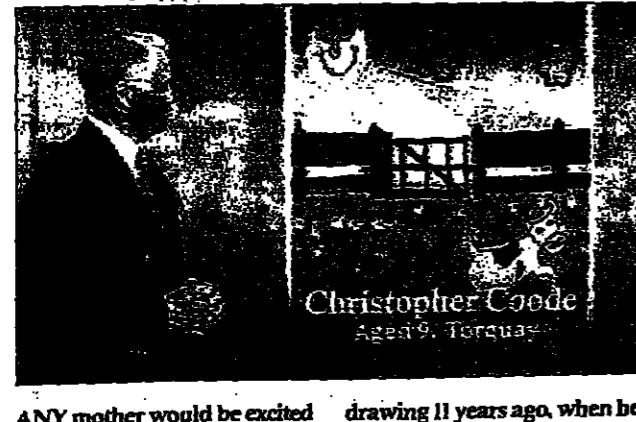
MORE than half of all sweetened food and drink products make no declaration on their packaging of the amount of sugar they contain, according to the largest survey to date of nutritional labelling.

Action & Information on Sugars, a voluntary network of health professionals, examined 1,350 products and awarded its "golden carrot award" for the best contribution to health promotion in the field of sugar, to the Co-operative Wholesale Society, which declares the sugar content on all its 3,000 own-label food and drinks.

The network will present brand-by-brand reports on food and drink product labelling next month, but announced yesterday that the CWS adopted the "most constructive" approach.

Brands that did not declare their sugar content, it said, included all the main brands of soft drinks and confectionery. Manufacturers are not obliged under current law to publicise precise sugar contents.

BBC discovers child prodigy, 11 years late

Christopher Coode
Aged 9, Torquay

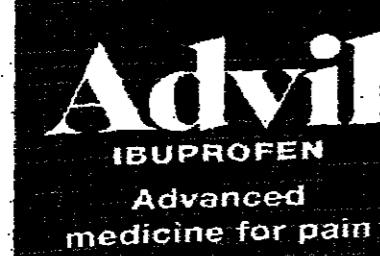
ANY mother would be excited to see a drawing by her son on television (Tim Jones writes). But they wouldn't all be as puzzled as Diana Coode.

BBC South West, which uses drawings sent in by schoolchildren to illustrate its weather forecasts, chose one by her son, Christopher. But Christopher is a 20-year-old art student. He had sent in the

drawing 11 years ago, when he was at Watcombe primary school in Torquay.

The station's weatherman, Craig Rich, said he recently cleared out his desk. "This is one of the funniest things that has happened to me in broadcasting. The picture must have been there for ten years and resurfaced when I cleared it out a couple of weeks ago."

New from America



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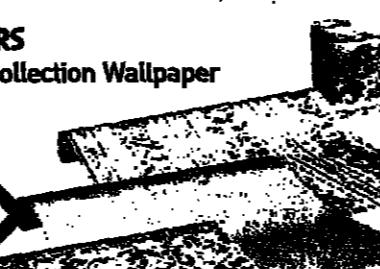
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THE TIMES SATURDAY APRIL 26 1997

JP10150

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AFTER YEARS OF EXPOSURE to the ravages of nature, most things out here have had their day. Not so the Jeep Cherokee Limited. With massive torque and superb ground clearance it continues to overcome obstacles other 4x4s can't. You know the stuff: boulders, river beds, mountains. Jeep's unique quadra link front suspension gives saloon car-like handling, making driving off road as smooth as cruising on it. And, whether you choose the 2.5 litre turbo diesel or 4.0 litre petrol, you can always rely on the legendary 4x4 system to keep you going. And going. But, being the new Cherokee, it doesn't stop there. Inside its redesigned interior you'll find air-conditioning, cruise control and automatic transmission*. ABS and dual airbags guarantee safety. And a superb 6 speaker stereo drowns out the sound of other drivers' frustration as you go places they can only dream about. Prices start at £22,895 on the road. THE NEW JEEP CHEROKEE LIMITED.

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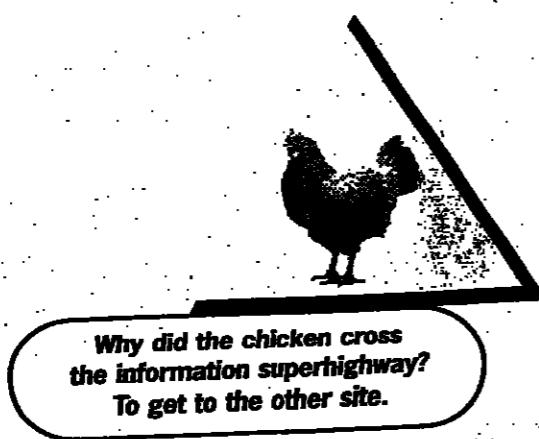
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around to fixing
that bridge
one of these days.

Jeep

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**Why did the chicken cross
the information superhighway?
To get to the other site.**



**Two words: "the internet".
They're almost enough to make
you stop reading, aren't they?
But Yell, the internet site
of Yellow Pages, is receiving 1.5*
million page views a month.
Translated, this means that
hundreds of thousands of people
regularly look at the site.
And you don't think they all need
a plumber, do you?**

"Pass the Yellow Pages", dear. I want to hear the latest Spice Girls single.
Strange? Yes. Impossible? Unfortunately not.
Good old Yellow Pages is now available on the internet.
To find good new Electronic Yellow Pages, go to the yell website at yell.co.uk.

**Yell is just like Yellow Pages. If Yellow Pages
had moving pictures, clucking
sounds and photos of Jarvis Cocker.**

There you'll find such things as travel guides, a Film Finder™ and a collection of gardening tips. There's also a list of the UK's most popular sites: The Spice Girls site, with extracts from their album, is at number 4 this week.

with extracts from their album, is at number 1...
And of course, Yell is the home of Electronic Yellow Pages. This is the most comprehensive on-line source of information about businesses in the country.

It includes the names and details of over 1.6 million companies. Which is a lot.

The headings will all be familiar to you from Yellow Pages: plumbers (8,280 of them), driving schools (6,911), restaurants (18,510), doctors (13,293) and of course chick sexers (1). You can search for them by business type and by

area. Some of the entries will also have photographs of their staff and their products and even a map showing where you can find them.

Should you be spending too much time indoors in front of that computer of yours, Green Fingers™ will tell you what you should be doing in the garden instead. (In case you're wondering, it's about time you started on the herb patch.)

The Film Finder includes links to Hollywood sites and fully comprehensive listings and reviews. So it can tell you where a particular film is on, what time it starts and not to bother seeing it.



**Electronic Yellow
Pages has 887 dog and
cat anatomers.**

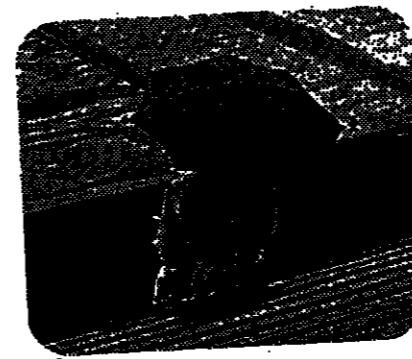


**A cat won't go
through the post. But
you can always
e-mail a photo of it.**



If you want to find out what's new on the web, take a look at Yellow Web's list of the Top 30 UK sites.

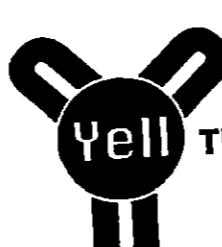
This week, the BBC Weather Site is at number 28. Capital Radio's site (with links to Pulp's home page) is at number 20 and UK weather links rises eleven



**places to number 15 (now
you don't have to remember
jokes, just where to find them).**

To visit a site, just click on their name and you'll be transferred straight out of AOL and into the new site.

**Yell and into the new site.
Transferred? Out of Yell?
Really, how could you,
after all we've done for you?**



Visit us at Yellow Pages. <http://www.yell.co.uk>

ELECTION 97

POLITICS What do you get if you cross Del Boy and Casanova?

-5

Matthew Parris - page 13

Will your job affect the election?

The flying canvasser

Campaigning in Britain's most beautiful seat

Ben Macintyre - page 16

Parties cannot rouse moor's walking dead

THE barman of the Lion Inn scratched his stubble and thought hard. "What do you say? No! I don't think we've had anyone come in here wanting to talk about that."

If there is a wind of political change blowing through the country it has not reached Blaize Ridge. Here there is only a stiff easterly that licks along the tops of the North York Moors and howls around one of the country's most remote public houses.

The house is the only dwelling on the 40-mile stretch of moorland between Osmotherley and Ravenscar which constitutes the Lyke Wake Walk. This is a barren land, but there are still people up there and they have a story to tell about the state of this nation as it prepares to go to the polls. They do not expect the political parties to stop to listen.

True, most people up here don't have anything to say. They are dead. Bronze Age tribes living in the valleys would carry their dead to the highest point of the moors where the bodies were burnt and buried in grave mounds.

Throughout the year their most frequent visitors are sheep and farmers. But around now scouts are arriving from all over Britain ahead of the legions that will trek this way over the summer. Every year thousands, sometimes up to 10,000, try to complete the Lyke Wake Walk, which follows the ancient burial mounds from Osmotherley in the west to Ravenscar in the east. Aficionados sing medieval songs about the watchings over (wakes) of corpses (lykes).

My background research was undertaken over pints of the local brew Black Sheep in the Three Tuns in Osmotherley. Paul Sherwood, a local JP and Antarctic Almoner of the Lyke Wake Club, alarmed me with tales of the ordeal ahead, but also gave me a flavour of local politics. He was popular with fellow drinkers for standing as an independent in the local council elections that take place on May 1 and are regarded by many as rather more important than the other poll that day.

The consensus of the villagers who eyed me with bemusement was that only the hardiest and most experienced

have gone up there to get out of the way of the election," he said as I struggled to keep up. Sadly he was not going my way, though he looked like he could make it to Ravenscar and back before breakfast.

Much of the early part of the walk follows the Cleveland Way, but as the path crossed the first burial mound the only company was a party of mountain bikers making heavy going on a lower path.

Then, half a dozen miles in, a lone walker came in the opposite direction. Les Jackson, 59, was enjoying the leisure that came with early retirement from ICI. "At least I have time for walking now. It's nice to be away from it all up here. Every time the doorbell rings it is somebody canvassing. I'm not bothered about any party. They are all going to be the same."

All the same. How this one theme echoed across the valleys from such different people along this walk. A little further on and a gang of four cheerful men from unemployment-ravaged Yarm rounded the corner. "We're all old Labour," Ray Seymour, 40, said. "But none of the parties are going to make this country any better." But despite disenchantment with Tony Blair's new Labour, there was at least an intention to vote out the present Government. Middlestrength FC as much as the lack of jobs, try as the reason. "John Major and Maggie Thatcher were in Yarm and they caused such a bottleneck we didn't get to the game until half-time," Mr Seymour said, referring to the Coca Cola Final against Leicester City. "So we were done twice by the blues."

Just before the path rose to its most hostile stretches I came across a man boiling with opinions. David Rutter, 44, whose 250-acre farm is now mostly devoted to sheep after the BSE scare, was angry but could not see a party that would appear him. He was mending a drystone wall torn down by thieves looking to sell the stones for garden paths and chaining a gate ripped off its hinges by bikers who have churned up his fields. "Politicians are all the same. When they are in they just look after themselves. Farmers don't have any clout any more."

The path crosses through

beautiful but bleak moorland, soggy underfoot and hard going against the wind up onto Blaize Ridge and the Lion Inn. "The walkers are starting to come through and we are like an oasis in the desert," said David Crossland, 26, the barman and son of the landlord as he pulled me a pint of Theakston's Old Peculier, a beer with a name unusually appropriate to the way I was feeling.

He said the absence of political debate was not down to an absence of regulars, as I had expected. "We do have regulars. Mostly farmers who come up from the villages. But it's just that we're not the sort who are interested in politics. You might think farmers would be concerned because of Europe and everything. But they are not, not up here."

In the wastes of

Yorkshire the quick and the dead tell Damian

Whitworth how little they care about politics

walkers tried the entire crossing alone, without the back-up and the rest stations that are set up on special walk days. Relieved to find an excuse, I devised a scheme that allowed me to skip sections of the route in *The Times* photographer's car. "And anyway," I told Diana Farrow, my landlady at the Moon House bed and breakfast, herself a veteran of the walk, "I wouldn't have time to complete the walk if I kept stopping to talk to people." She gave me a funny look. "You might meet Old Nick up there, but I don't know who else."

It looked like a lonely hike. So, just outside the village, at the stone that marks the start of the walk, it was a cause of minor celebration to find I was not alone.

Alan Sanderson, an extraordinary sprightly 83-year-old, overtook me at a terrifying speed with his dog, Pop. "We'll all be very pleased when May 2 comes. Some people might be politically minded, but I'm not. Not at my age. You might find a few people up there, but they'll

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Ill-fated Tory chicken grilled by police

By JAMES LANDALE

TONY BLAIR visited Kent yesterday to meet victims of crime but was confronted by a victim of tough police action — the ill-fated Tory chicken.

The Labour leader's trip to Dover was interrupted by the latest appearance of the Tory fowl which was given a hands-on example of how Mr Blair intends to get tough on crime.

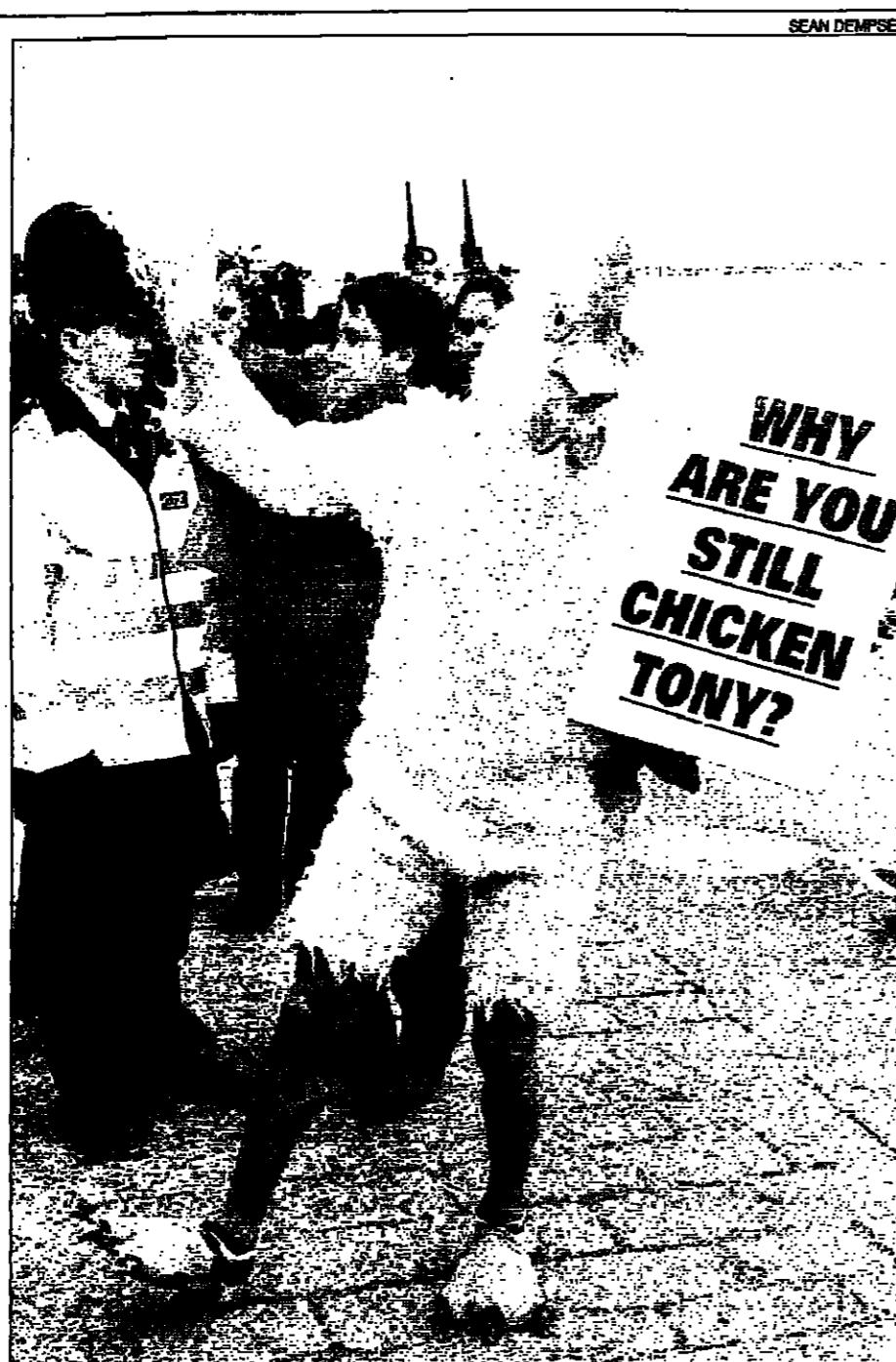
The chicken, which has not been seen since appearing in a kill in Edinburgh last week, was marched off by police after he tried to disrupt Mr Blair's visit to the port to discuss smuggling with customs officials. Earlier, Mr Blair met some victims of crime in Folkestone.

Brandishing a placard saying "Are you still chicken, Mr Blair?", the fowl and his Tory minder somehow managed to get into the heavily guarded quayside as Mr Blair and his wife, Cherie, disembarked after a short boat trip. Labour officials and press officers tried in vain to push the chicken away until harbour police arrived on the scene. "Please go away, Mr Chicken," one of the officials cried.

The chicken was bundled into a car by the police, one of whom said: "He should have dressed as a duck because then we could have seen if he could swim."

The chicken, which is attempting to highlight Mr Blair's refusal to agree to a television debate with John Major, was grilled briefly by police before being released outside the harbour gates. A police spokeswoman said the chicken had got into the port by pretending to be a member of the media. "He was not arrested or charged," she said. "A report will be submitted to the Chief Officer of Police to determine possible further action."

The port, which is owned by the Harbour Board, is private property and the chicken could have broken trespass laws. A Tory



The chicken at Dover. He was taken away by police and bundled into a car

spokesman said the police had been called to "rescue" the chicken from the Labour officials who wanted to throw him into the sea.

The incident came after Mr Blair unveiled plans for a flagship crime Bill in Labour's first Queen's Speech if the party wins office.

The Crime and Disorder Bill will include plans to crackdown on juvenile crime, nuisance neighbours, racial violence and drink and drug-related crime.

The focus will be a reform of the youth justice system with a new fast-track punishment for persistent young offenders. Other pledges include a new "final warning" to replace cautioning for

young people, reform of the *doli incapax* law so that children, aged 10 to 13, can be considered able to differentiate between right and wrong, and a new National Youth Justice Board.

Special forms of injunctions — known as Community Safety Orders — will be set up to allow police and local authorities to restrain particular individuals involved in anti-social behaviour. Professional witnesses, such as undercover police, will also be used to help deal with their problem children. New laws forcing serious drug-addicted offenders to undergo treatment and random testing will also be included.

Labour also plans to create a new offence to cover racial harassment and racially motivated violence. To curb alcohol-related crime, Labour wants to tighten licensing laws and introduce stricter pub exclusion orders. They also want city centre landlords to use glasses made of toughened glass to reduce injuries in fights where glasses are used as weapons.

The Bill will include plans for a curfew for children under ten who are allowed to roam the streets at night. A new Parental Responsibility Order will force parents to accept guidance and counselling to help deal with their problem children. New laws forcing serious drug-addicted offenders to undergo treatment and random testing will also be included.

THE Tory plans to privatise the state pension ran into trouble yesterday when the party admitted that there could be billions of pounds of unforeseen start-up costs. Senior Tory strategists even conceded that tax cuts might be jeopardised as a result.

As Labour's attacks forced the Tories to flesh out the details, it also emerged that people aged up to 30, rather than in their early twenties as previously estimated, might be included.

Labour is telling pensioners that their basic state pension is not safe with the Tories. That is untrue. The changes will not affect anyone now aged 60 or over. But the Tories are still vague about who would be included in the scheme, allowing Labour to run with its scare stories. Yesterday they said that the scheme would mainly be for those entering the workforce, aged between 16 and 22, but one spindoctor said he hoped those aged 30 to 40 would be included.

Peter Lilley, the social security secretary said that the scheme would be aimed at the early twenties, but it was possible that those up to 25 could be included if the Chancellor had enough money, and if the plan proved popular.

Extending the scheme to those aged 30 to 40 would bring two problems: they cost more in the short term and they would have to be given rebates to compensate for their contributions to the basic state pension made before

they go onto the scheme.

John Major says the new pension may pay out £175 a week, compared to the basic state pension of £65. He suggested at yesterday's press conference that some measures might have to be taken to phase in the more generous sum, to avoid huge differences in payments between the two schemes. However, Tory stra-

Labour

The Labour election pamphlet promises pension cover from cradle to grave

Until now the Tories have argued that the £7 billion a year cost of the scheme would be paid for by stopping women drawing state pensions until they are 65, not 60 as at present.

They say the equalisation of state pension age, due to take effect from 2010, would save £15 billion. This leaves a seven or eight year funding hole as the scheme may start in 2002 or 2003. Originally, when John Major announced the Basic Pension Plus it was due to start in 2001.

The other source of funding, spoken of for the first time yesterday, is to make changes to make Serps — the State Earnings Related Pensions Scheme — less generous.

At present Serps, the additional state pension, is calculated on the highest year of earnings. In future it will be calculated on average earnings. Sources say this will build up to savings of £7 billion a year by 2030. Money will start coming in in 2000 but the Tories now admit this will not cover the start up costs.

"There will be start up costs," admitted one party strategist. "And people may have to forgo tax cuts." However, he could not put a figure on what those costs would be.

He suggested that progress towards a basic 20p tax rate could still be made in a first parliament but this would be unlikely to happen in a second term, when resources would be stretched.

egists and social security ministers appeared unaware of what the prime minister was talking about. Later a party source said Mr Major meant that if it was affordable there could be top-ups for those left on the basic pension.

One of Labour's most credible charges has been that the Basic Pension Plus scheme has not been properly costed.

Looking for bright idea to meet the challenge of a grey future

THE Basic Pension Plus scheme, the Conservative answer to the problems of a "greying" population and the generally inadequate level of provision for retirement among the population, was unveiled in early March.

Under Basic Pension Plus, both the basic and the State Earnings Related Pensions Scheme (Serps) would be abolished. They would be replaced by personal pensions, managed by life insurance companies. Tax relief on contributions would be abolished.

The scheme was based on

Anne Ashworth and Caroline Merrell examine the background and the criticisms of the Tory plan that has come to the forefront of the election campaign

2030, five working people will have to pay the pensions of three people.

However, some influential observers, including the Institute of Financial Studies, believe there is no real funding problem for the basic pension. The Institute points out that the overall tax take will increase as more people earn higher amounts.

This will more than compensate for the larger number of retired people. The basic pension will also be extremely low as a proportion of average earnings in a few decades time.

the Chilean model of pension provision, introduced under the regime of General Pinochet, the military dictator, as a replacement for the country's near-bankrupt pension scheme.

Like the Chilean project, Basic Pension Plus will be compulsory, obliging everyone to provide for their retirement. This would be a revolution for a nation where pension saving has tended to be an almost optional activity.

At present, the state pensions of those in retirement are paid for by those in work.

Department of Social Security statistics show that today there are five working people to support every pensioner. By

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED ON BASIC PENSION PLUS

How will Basic Pension Plus work?

For those about to start work, and those in their early twenties, the basic pension and Serps will be replaced by Basic Pension Plus. These individuals will get a £9-a-week National Insurance rebate to be invested as a replacement for the basic pension. They will also get a rebate of 5 per cent of their earnings liable to NI, which will be invested as a Serps substitute. They will be able to add their own contributions to these rebates. Employers can also contribute.

The government contributions alone should provide a minimum pension of £175 a week. The Conservatives claim that the value of pension produced by investing £9 a week will not be less than the value of the basic pension.

How much will the new pension cost?

Basic Pension Plus is intended to save money. The initial cost will be £160 million. This will rise rapidly to £7 billion as more people join the workforce and receive NI rebates. Eventually there should be an overall saving of £40 billion, because no basic state pension or Serps would need to be paid.

If those in work are paying for their own pensions, who will pay the pensions of those retiring?

Abolishing tax relief on pension contributions should save £8 billion a year. To compensate for the loss of relief, the Tories have pledged that pensions when paid out will be tax-free up to an unspecified limit.

Another £8 billion will be needed to pay for those in retirement. This will come from increased tax revenues.

What is the principal criticism of the Basic Pension Plus proposals?

The plans are said to depend too much on the life insurance industry whose past record in pension sales is lamentable. Life insurers have compensated only a few of the 500,000 victims of the personal pension scandals of the late Eighties and early Nineties.

How did the Conservatives react to these criticisms?

Ministers swiftly reacted to these criticisms. Angela Knight, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, rebuked Sir Andrew Large, chief executive of the Securities and Investments Board (SIB), the City watchdog, over the slow progress of the review into personal pension mis-selling. Meanwhile, Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, warned life insurance companies that they would not be permitted to be involved in the Basic Pension Plus scheme if they had not settled their compensation liabilities. There will be a list of approved insurance company suppliers.

What were the other criticisms?

There was some dismay over the promise of a £175-a-week tax-

free pension for a contribution of £9 a week, plus 5 per cent of National Insurance. This was considered to be based on over-optimistic predictions for investment returns. NPI, the insurance company and one of the leading names in pensions commented: "Our preliminary analysis of the projections suggests that a 4 per cent real rate of return will be required. This could be quite a challenging target."

The removal of tax relief on contributions has also been the subject of comment. Tax relief not only encourages individuals to contribute to pensions, it makes possible for them to afford to contribute more of their income. Although the Conservatives have promised that pensions will be tax-free when paid, it seems impossible to guarantee this pledge as future governments might move to change the tax rules, deducting income tax from pensions when paid.

How does Basic Pension Plus compare with the Labour proposals?

Labour proposals for the future of pensions are far more vague. Labour does not envisage having to scrap the basic pension, which is currently worth £62.45 a week. Like the Conservatives, Labour will continue to link rises in the basic pension to inflation, which means that the basic pension as a proportion of average earnings will rapidly decrease.

Labour does not intend to abolish Serps straightaway, although it does agree that the system is unworkable in its present form.

Labour has been exploring the options for more private provision of pensions, but is wary of giving a large role in this process to the insurance companies. Instead it believes in a second tier of "stakeholder" pension, which could be run by the unions or other affinity groups. The 4.5 per cent of National Insurance contributions that go towards the funding of Serps pension will go towards this pension, and Serps will gradually be wound down.

What is the verdict of the life insurance industry?

Standard Life, one of the biggest names in the business, believes that both the Labour proposals and the Conservative plans lack the element of compulsion necessary to ensure that individuals make sufficient provision for their old age. A spokesman said: "As far as life insurance companies are concerned, the Labour plans would only work if the schemes proved to be very popular as otherwise our margins would be too low."

The Conservatives will have to work hard to persuade young people who are making contributions out of taxed income that any future government would guarantee their final pension fund was tax-free."

Branson to endorse plan for utility windfall tax

RICHARD Branson will today become one of the first mainstream British businessmen to endorse Labour's windfall tax (writes Andrew Pierce). The entrepreneur will stop short of endorsing the Labour Party but will reiterate his belief that his Virgin Group should be independent of party politics.

Mr Branson, an admirer of the changes to Labour, will endorse two more of the party's policies in a speech

alongside Mr Blair. He will back proposals to divert some of the profits from the midweek National Lottery to the health service and schools. Mr Branson proposed an identical deal to Margaret Thatcher in June 1988 when he headed a group of businessmen who offered to run a profits-for-charity lottery.

Mr Branson will also praise

Labour's competition policy at

a photo-call with Mr Blair at Euston station.



Branson: Blair admirer

C4 refuses BNP slot

CHANNEL 4 has refused to show a party election broadcast by the British National Party claiming it violates an Independent Television Commission code. Other channels showed the broadcast.

Earlier this week the station asked the BNP to change the programme as it showed people who had not consented to be in the broadcast. Channel 4 said the new version still contravened an ITC programme code but the BNP refused more changes.

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America's mixed army goes on trial

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN ABERDEEN,
MARYLAND

JURORS were deliberating yesterday at a court-martial that hinged on sex and power and questioned the US Army's achievements in integrating men and women in its ranks.

Staff Sergeant Delmar Simpson, 32, a towering figure, faced 19 charges of rape involving six trainees under his command and three dozen other indecent acts against 22 women. He was portrayed as a sexual predator, but it was suggested that some of the women had turned sex to their advantage.

Sgt Simpson's case was the biggest brought against 12 drill sergeants accused of sex crimes at the vast Aberdeen army base on Chesapeake Bay, north of Washington.

To the army's dismay, the Aberdeen scandal unleashed a barrage of similar complaints. More than 7,000 women have called a telephone hotline, leading to 322 investigations of sexual abuse at bases around the world. The army's senior Sergeant-Major has been suspended, pending a sexual harassment inquiry, and there is trouble at the West Point academy.

How big a quandary the army faces is still emerging, but evidence supports the view voiced privately by many senior officers that co-educational training is failing and threatens military discipline. General John Shalikashvili, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said: "It's too early to say if this is a system problem or individuals who have done something very, very wrong."

One in seven soldiers is a woman, but Olympia Snowe, the only woman on the Senate armed services committee, says that integration needs to be reconsidered. She says a Pentagon survey showed that half the women in uniform had suffered harassment in the previous year.



One of the fossils of a chicken-size dinosaur, about 135 million years old, found in northeastern China

Scientists thrilled by fossil find at Chinese site

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

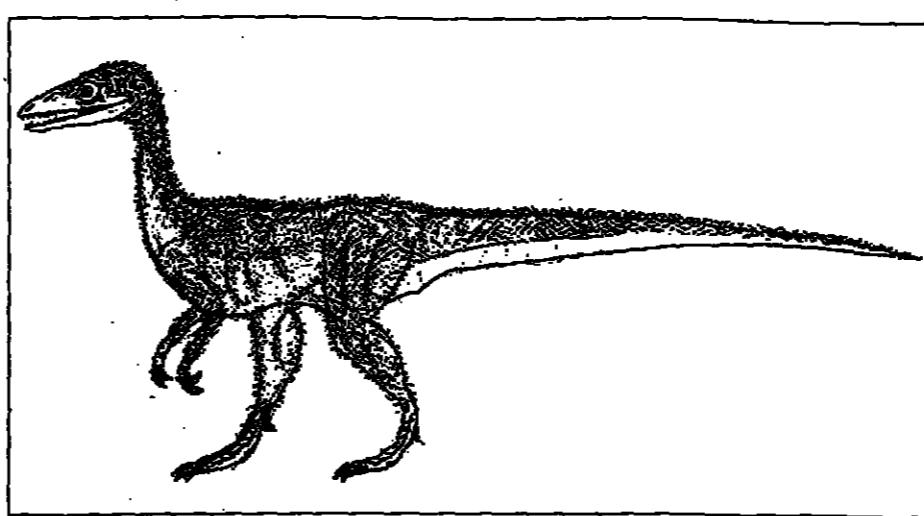
A DINOSAURS' graveyard found in a remote region of northern China is being hailed as the richest source of fossils in the world.

Remains of primitive birds, mammals, insects, plants and dinosaurs have been discovered, apparently frozen at a moment about 135 million years ago when a sudden catastrophe, perhaps a volcanic eruption, wiped them out.

Among the most exciting fossils are more than 200 of a primitive bird, *Confuciusornis*, and several specimens of a chicken-sized dinosaur, one with an egg still in its body waiting to be laid. Chinese paleontologists have named this species *Sinosauropelta prima*, and suggest that it may be the first true bird.

Inside another specimen of the same species was the jaw bone from a primitive mammal that had just been eaten. The jawbone is about an inch wide and has sharp teeth.

Details of the site, at Beipiao Liaoning in northeastern China, were announced at a meeting in Philadelphia on Thursday by an international



A drawing of *Sinosauropelta prima*, which scientists think could be the first true bird

team invited by the Chinese authorities to visit the site. The team was led by Dr John Ostrom, a retired professor from Yale, who said that this site was one of the most exciting moments of his life. "Nowhere else in the world are fossils from such a critical time so well preserved," he said.

The first fossils from the site were found by a local farmer, who recognised their commercial potential. Since then, Chinese paleontologists have explored the site and begun reporting results. A remarkable feature is the excellent preservation of the fossils.

While many fossil sites only preserve the bones of ancient animals, the Liaoning site preserved surface features such as claws, scales and skin.

There are plant remains, insect remains, fish remains and land animal remains. It has just begun to be exploited," Dr Ostrom said.

The group, also comprising Dr Peter Wellnhofer of the University of Munich, David Bubier of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, Dr Larry Martin of the University of Kansas and Dr Alan Brush of the University of Connecticut, were especially interested in fossils that may represent a transitional form between dinosaurs and birds.

These include *Sinosauropelta prima*, which appears to have had feathers running in a line along its spine. Dr Ostrom described the bird-dinosaur's covering as "unlike anything we have ever seen in the world before — quite different from

FBI links Beijing to campaign funding

BY IAN BRODIE

THE FBI has reportedly amassed substantial evidence linking top officials in the Chinese Government to attempts to buy influence among American politicians.

According to Washington sources, the Beijing officials approved the campaign-financing plan in 1995. The scheme allegedly continued throughout last year's election and still does.

Intercepted secret communications between the Chinese Embassy and Beijing have now established that the attempts to buy influence were sanctioned by the Government, according to an account in *The Washington Post* by Bob Woodward, the Watergate reporter. Earlier, some White House officials had concluded that the scheme might have gone no higher than the embassy.

Officials refused to name the top Chinese who allegedly approved the plans, but one source said: "It's a pretty small top." He said that the two leading officials in China were President Jiang Zemin and Li Peng, the Prime Minister.

The implications for Sino-American relations could be profound. The Chinese strenuously denied any involvement, but were warned during recent visits to Beijing by Vice-President Al Gore and Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State, that it would be considered serious if it were proved that Chinese government money had been injected into the American political process. The issue seems likely to come up again when Qian Qichen, the Chinese Foreign Minister, meets Ms Albright in Washington on Monday.

Possible unsuspecting recipients of Chinese funds are believed to be at least six members of Congress, as well as last year's Clinton-Gore campaign war chest and President Clinton's legal defence fund.

Oklahoma victim tells of blast

FROM TOM RHODES IN DENVER

THE Oklahoma City bombing was relived in a Denver courtroom yesterday as prosecutors opened their evidence and played a tape recording of the blast to tearful relatives and victims.

Among the first witnesses in the trial of Timothy McVeigh, chief suspect for America's worst act of terrorism, was a Marine blinded in the explosion. Michael Norfleet, a decorated Gulf War hero, said he had parked his car just yards from the rented yellow van which blew up only minutes later, killing 168 adults and children.

Mr Norfleet, awarded an air combat medal during Op-

eration Desert Storm, said he saw someone he thought was a Marine leaving the van. He went to the sixth floor of the Alfred Murrah building. Sergeant Benjamin Davis, a colleague expecting promotion that day, sat on one side of the room. Mr Norfleet went to the other to talk to two other sergeants. He never saw Sergeant Davis alive again.

"I just about had time to get 'Hello' and 'Good morning' out of my mouth when the bomb hit," he told the court. A shard of glass struck his right eye and cut an artery in his neck. The Marine also suffered a broken nose and fractured skull, but managed to walk down the stairs to safety. "I knew if I stayed in that building I would die," he said.

Mr Norfleet's testimony was part of a prosecution strategy to shock the jury with intimate details of suffering to cover cracks in evidence, which failed to place Mr McVeigh in Oklahoma City on the day.

Lou Klaver, a lawyer working near by, described the aftermath of the blast. "It was like a war zone outside," she said. "Everything was down in my office when I went back: the walls were down, everything was wet and my computer was stuck with glass shards."

Senate backs chemical arms treaty

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE US Senate has approved a world treaty outlawing chemical weapons, handing President Clinton a major foreign policy victory.

The 74-26 verdict, clearing by seven votes the two-thirds majority needed for treaty approval, opened the way for the United States to ratify the pact, the Chemical Weapons Convention, before it takes

effect next Tuesday. Mr Clinton, who had invested much political and personal capital in a high-profile campaign to win approval for the treaty, applauded the vote — in which 29 Republicans joined all 45 Democrats to back it — and expressed his "profound gratitude" to the Senate for "serving America well".

Only the Senate is required to give consent to treaty ratification. However, both the House of Representatives and the Senate will now be asked to pass implementing legislation to the chemical treaty.

In Moscow, the lower house of the Russian parliament yesterday postponed ratification of the treaty, saying that it needed Western funds and more time to destroy its stockpile. However, it backed a draft law committing Russia in principle to destroying its chemical weapons arsenal.

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Democracy tastes bitter for hungry poor of Mongolia

MONGOLIA's dreams of a better life under democracy are fading. The country, with only 2.4 million people, is beset by poverty, with young frontier troops and children starving. Every day brings demonstrations and hunger strikes over unemployment, unpaid pensions and health and education cuts.

This economic pain is caused by the "shock therapy" of abolishing the centralised economy. As a result, a candidate for the reformed Communist Party looks set to win next month's presidential elections.

The problems facing this vast nation lying between Russia and China are familiar in the context of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and the four-party Democratic Union Coalition, elected in a surprise win last June, still has three years of its mandate to run. But, given the collapsing social fabric, envoy and even Democratic supporters are uncertain if Mongolia's first non-Communist Government in 75 years will see out its term or if serious social unrest will break out.

There are certainly more cars on the street than there were eight or nine years ago, when this was still the one-party Mongolian People's Republic. But there are also many more poor people, including hundreds of abandoned street children who sleep underground alongside the capital's hot-water pipes during harsh weather.

The sense of optimism after the inexperienced coalition's victory last June has largely dissipated under wrenching economic reforms supervised by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The lack of a social safety net has made matters worse. By the most conservative estimates, inflation runs at 50 per cent and unemployment at 15 per cent.

Foreign non-government organisations say Mongolia could soon be in the situation of being a major humanitarian emergency. "We know the reforms are necessary, but without a safety net it is suicide," said John Beaucler of Save the Children in Britain. A Western envoy added:



James Pringle in Ulan Bator finds the pain of free-market reforms has boosted chances of a Communist comeback

"There are credible reports of children starving to death."

At the same time, Mongolia now has a largely free press.

Television news shows scenes of anti-government protests, and there is robust debate in the Great Hural (parliament). There is even a lively stock market complete with yuppies with cellular phones.

Genghis Khan, the Lord of the Universe, the country's historical hero, has been fully rehabilitated as the national symbol whereas, in Communist times, his name was barely mentioned in whispers.

But prostitution, underground before, is now widespread and few believe the official claim that the country has just one HIV case. There is growing crime, and alcoholism is on the increase. But a much wider variety of food, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and consumer goods are on sale in the markets, though accessible only to a prosperous minority.

"Every third child is malnourished in some way," said Otto Farkas, of World Vision.

"There is a rapid collapse of the safety net and people cannot afford to buy food — 36 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line."

Seventeen children are reported to have died of malnutrition in one Gobi province,



Genghis Khan, back in favour on a poster

and in the capital malnutrition was "a major contributing cause of much infant mortality," said Mr Beaucler.

"We know we need economic reform, but our lives have become too hard," said a young woman in central Sukhbaatar Square during a pro-Communist demonstration by jobless people in which the police made an arrest. In fact, nobody doubts that economic reform is vital.

"We have corruption, poverty, street children, prostitution, indigent old people, alcoholism and declining education and health care," said L. Erdenechuluun, a former UN Ambassador and now adviser to President Orchirbat, 55, one of three candidates in the May 18 polls.

"We have no money to ease the situation, and the prospect of social unrest is real."

Ms H. Hulan, a Democratic MP and chairman of the Hural's social affairs committee, said: "Boldness is fine, but common sense and rationality are also important. People are suffering and are not happy with us. Patience is running out fast."

If the former Communist candidate, N. Barabandi, wins the presidency, the Democrats will retain their parliamentary lead. But the President has veto power over legislation and his veto can be overturned only by a two-thirds parliamentary majority. The Democrats are one vote short of that. A President coming from the Opposition could thwart or dilute economic reforms, envoys believe.

C. Enkhbayar, a business executive, summed it up. "Before 1990, life was beautiful. Everyone had just enough."

But now the gap between rich and poor is growing. I don't want the Communists again because I prefer freedom. I will vote Democrat because I believe it will some day provide a better future," Mr Tung's supporters cannot disguise.

It is not every day that Mr Clinton spends 25 minutes with a legislator from a medium-sized city. But Mr Lee is the leader of the party which won the most votes in the 1995 election for Hong Kong's 60-member Legislative Council.

China will abolish this body at midnight on June 30 and replace it with one hand-picked to rubberstamp Mr Tung's decrees. Mr Lee and

afterwards say — even if he expects Beijing to adhere to its treaty obligations to Hong Kong.

Mr Clinton also is becoming aware that Chinese ambitions in East Asia, including reincorporation of Taiwan and domination of strategic sea lanes, may cool if Beijing realises Washington sees Hong Kong as a tripwire, not just a territory China can reabsorb on any terms.

It was acknowledged in the State Department that Mr Lee's talk with Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State, persuaded her to attend the handing-over ceremonies on June 30, explicitly as a sign that America is committed to Hong Kong's status not only as a trading post but as a key factor in the growth of Asian liberty.

Americans are becoming disillusioned with the Clinton policy of "constructive engagement" which claims that not confronting Beijing publicly on human rights, and even weapons sales to Iraq, Libya and Iran, saves Chinese complicity and produces gradual liberalisation. Mr Clinton recognises, therefore, that it was good politics as well as good policy to see Mr Lee and



The £560 million Tsing Ma Bridge is lit up on the eve of its official opening by Baroness Thatcher tomorrow. It will provide the main link to Hong Kong's £12 billion new airport which will be completed next year

Setback for Beijing as Clinton smiles on colony's liberals

FROM JONATHAN MURSKY
IN HONG KONG

THE meeting last week between Martin Lee, leader of Hong Kong's Democrats, and President Clinton was a political triumph for human rights and the rule of law which Beijing cannot dismiss.

Equally, the cancellation in the same week of a trip to the United States by Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's Chief Executive-designate, is a political disaster for Beijing's chosen successor to Chris Patten, the Governor, which even Mr Tung's supporters cannot disguise.

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Mr Lee is regularly denounced by Mr Tung for "bad-mouthing" Hong Kong while abroad. But although Mr Tung had been planning a visit to the United States next month to set a record straight, he abruptly cancelled the trip while Mr Lee was on his way to see President Clinton. Those around Mr Tung realise that after Mr Lee's success, Mr Tung would have to be eloquent indeed to justify his curtailment of Hong Kong's liberties because "Chinese values" favour obligations, family and order rather than individual rights. Mr Clinton and Newt Gingrich, the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, have made plain that how Beijing treats Hong Kong will be a benchmark of its international behaviour.

□ Visa concessions: America announced last night it would grant ten-year multiple-entry visas to holders of new Hong Kong passports after sovereignty reverts to China in July. Holders of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) passports will receive the same visa treatment now enjoyed by holders of Hong Kong British passports. (Reuters)

FRANKI CHAN / AP
WORKING SUMMER

UN envoy on Sahara mission

James Baker, the former US Secretary of State, arrived in Algeria yesterday in an attempt to resolve one of the world's most intractable disputes: the conflict between Morocco and the Polisario independence movement over Western Sahara (Michael Binyon writes).

Mr Baker, who has become a United Nations envoy, has had two meetings with King Hassan about a possible settlement in the mineral-rich former Spanish colony, most of which was annexed by Morocco in 1975.

Admiral sacked

Karachi: Admiral Mansur ul-Haq, Pakistan's Chief of Naval Staff, has been dismissed after widespread allegations of bribery concerning the purchase of military hardware (Zahid Hussain writes).

His removal came after claims that he had received money linked to procurement of Agosta 90B submarines from France and other equipment.

Clash kills five

Lagos: A man aged 75 was beheaded and four others were killed as ethnic clashes spread to Koko town in the oil-producing midwestern part of Nigeria, newspapers reported. Grenades and dynamite were used in the attacks, houses were set ablaze and the hospital in the town was damaged. (Reuters)

Suicide plan

Los Angeles: Five thousand Uwa tribespeople in Colombia are threatening mass suicide, copying the legendary example of 17th-century ancestors in the face of Spanish colonialism, to protest at drilling by Occidental Oil on land they say is theirs. (AP)

Double trouble

Moscow: A puppet of President Yeltsin used in a popular weekly satirical television show has been stolen. A spare that is a less convincing likeness is being used while a new one is made. (Reuters)

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Gaullist squabble threatens Juppé as poll lead shrinks

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

ALAIN JUPPÉ, the French Prime Minister, was under fire yesterday as cracks appeared in his centre-right majority's parliamentary election campaign.

Senior figures in the Gaullist-led coalition suggested he was uncertain of being re-appointed to head the Government even if he wins next month's two-round election.

The speculation came as an opinion poll showed the Socialist Opposition catching up with a Government that enjoyed a comfortable lead before President Chirac called the snap election on Monday.

The poll reflected a bad week for the Gaullist Prime Minister. His popularity is in freefall, Gaullist Eurosceptics threaten to speak out, and transport strikes paralysed much of France yesterday.

Industrial action, which hit the railway network, Air France's domestic flights and ferry services to Corsica, highlighted the dangers facing M Chirac and M Juppé. They have pledged to continue policies designed to reduce the public deficit and prepare France for the single currency if the Centre-Right is re-elected.

At a time when the French are concerned at unemployment of more than three million, worried about welfare



Juppé: his popularity this week is in freefall

cuts and irritated by repeated public-sector stoppages, the promise of continuity has limited appeal. So, too, does M Juppé, according to an opinion poll published in *Paris-Match*, which showed just 25 per cent of voters are satisfied with his performance as Prime Minister.

His tactic is working. An opinion poll published by *Le Point* said the Gaullist coalition is losing ground and stands to win a majority of just three seats. In the outgoing parliament, it had a majority of almost 200. Voters find M Juppé's campaign, based on the slogan "Let's Change the Future", better than M Juppé's says the survey.

In an attempt to distract attention from M Juppé, some of his allies, including M Léotard, have hinted that M Chirac might appoint a fresh face as Prime Minister if the Centre-Right is returned to office.

The French press had assumed the President Chirac would reselect M Juppé. But even M Juppé has given credence to the rumour, saying: "In legislative elections, one vote for a majority, not a head of government."

Leading article, page 23

HIV cases rise 33% in South Africa

FROM R. W. JOHNSON
IN JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH AFRICA'S Health Minister, Dr Nkosazana Zuma, yesterday unveiled new figures showing that the number of people infected by HIV, the AIDS-related virus, rose in a year by 33 per cent.

In 1996, about 2.4 million people, or 6 per cent of the population, were HIV-positive, a rise of one third over 1995.

Tests carried out across the country showed that among pregnant women attending ante-natal clinics the HIV rate increased by 30 per cent in the year, with one woman in seven now infected. Such women will inevitably bear HIV-infected babies. 80 per cent of whom are expected to die before the age of two.

In the province of KwaZulu-Natal alone, 1,000 such babies are born every month. Another 700-800 South Africans contract the disease every day.

Mrs Zuma, presenting the figures, commented simply that "this is bad news and it should be written in bold print". However, many AIDS workers are highly critical of the Government's ineffectual efforts to stop the spread of the syndrome.

In order not to offend conservative African social mores, all anti-AIDS publicity carefully avoids being explicit. Typically, the public is urged to "join the new struggle — unite to fight against AIDS", with pictures of demonstrating Africans in ANC colours, suggesting that the campaign is a sort of extension of the anti-apartheid struggle.

Not surprisingly, many Americans are confused by such propaganda. There is no mention of condoms or often of sexual practices in general.

■ **Jerusalem:** Israel condemned the resolution as "a manifestation of unconscious onslaught on a perfectly innocent act by Israel", said David Bar-Ilan, the communications director for Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister. (Reuters)



French paratroopers preparing in Brazzaville to assist in a possible evacuation of foreigners from Kinshasa

Fears over fate of missing Rwandans

BY DAVID ORR
IN NAIROBI AND
OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THERE is growing concern about the fate of 85,000 Rwandan refugees in the jungle of Zaire's remote interior. Amid fears of massacres and human rights abuses by rebel forces, the United Nations yesterday confirmed that it had carried out an aerial search of the area where the refugees were last seen, but failed to find them.

"The first priority remains to find the refugees," said Paul Stromberg for the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR) in Kisangani yesterday. UN officials said they were horrified to find Kasese refugee camp, 15 miles south of Kisangani, empty of its 55,000 inhabitants when they visited it on Thursday. They had been denied earlier access to the camp by rebels of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, who said they were conducting military operations.

The rebels, who control more than half of Zaire, are trying to overthrow President Mobutu Sese Seko. "I am absolutely shocked," said Filippo Grandi, the head of UNHCR in eastern Zaire, after visiting

Kasese. "There was a camp here a few days ago. People were sick, hungry and too weak to walk. Now where are they? We need answers from the rebels about their fate."

Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader, has dismissed allegations that his fighters have slaughtered many refugees. He says his men simply intervened to protect local villagers who were attacked by Rwandan militiamen. But the UN Security Council has condemned the rebels for obstructing the distribution of relief supplies and hindering attempts to establish the fate of the missing refugees.

Lima rebels 'were shot after surrender'

BY GABRIELLA GAMINI
AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

RELATIVES of the 14 Tupac Amaru rebels killed in Tuesday's storming of the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Lima complained yesterday that the authorities were not allowing their proper burial. The relatives also claim that they have not been allowed to view the bodies.

The claims come amid reports that some rebels were killed after surrendering, some with a close-range shot to the head. Two teenage women guerrillas are said to have been heard pleading with soldiers, and crying "surrender, surrender" seconds before they were shot by the commandos who stormed the residence and succeeded in freeing alive all but one of the 72 hostages who had been held

ports that some rebels were killed after surrendering, some with a close-range shot to the head. Two teenage women guerrillas are said to have been heard pleading with soldiers, and crying "surrender, surrender" seconds before they were shot by the commandos who stormed the residence and succeeded in freeing alive all but one of the 72 hostages who had been held

According to *La República*, microphones hidden inside two guitars had picked up the women's desperate pleas. The newspaper quoted military sources as saying that intelligence services had recorded the surrender cries. The guitars were among various instruments delivered to the residence and succeeded in freeing alive all but one of the 72 hostages who had been held since before last Christmas.

Several of the freed hos-

UN backs settlement boycott

FROM JAMES BONE
IN NEW YORK

THE United Nations General Assembly yesterday called for an international boycott of Israel's settlement activities in occupied Palestinian territory and demanded an immediate halt to a Jewish housing project in east Jerusalem.

The 185-nation assembly voted against the Har Homa

settlement by 134-3, with only Israel, America and Micronesia against. Germany abstained. The General Assembly first condemned the settlement project last month. However, it took up the subject again, holding its first emergency session since 1982, after the United States cast its veto twice in the 15-nation Security Council to shield Israel from criticism. America complained that the assembly was usurping the authority of



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'Grand Inquisitor' emerges from the shadows of Vatican as concern grows over pontiff's health

Cardinal puts faith in doctrine

AS Pope John Paul II visibly declines, the *éminence grise* of the Vatican, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Bavaria, the Pope's "Grand Inquisitor" and chief doctrinal watchdog for the past 16 years, is building an ever higher profile.

The frail Pope, 76, is keeping up a grueling travel programme. This weekend he is in the Czech Republic, following his visit to Sarajevo a week ago when he braved wintry showers and an apparent attempt to blow up his motorcade. Next month he goes to Beirut, despite warnings of Islamic terrorist attacks, and to his Polish homeland.

The pontiff is defying medical

ROME FILE
by RICHARD OWEN

advice in setting such a pace. At Easter he delivered his *Urbi et Orbi* message sitting down for the first time, and his voice was so weak many were alarmed. In this *fin de siècle* atmosphere, Cardinal Ratzinger is increasingly in the limelight.

The deceptively soft-spoken and white-haired cardinal was

Archbishop of Munich before being summoned to the Holy Office in 1981. The Office — properly called the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith — is the modern successor to the Inquisition, and Cardinal Ratzinger has been ruthless in weeding out heresy.

In the past few months his

influence has become overt, with his views flooding the media. He has made nods towards liberal Roman Catholics, for example by suggesting that the decision to grant a divorce might be made by local bishops rather than the Vatican. He has also praised the reformed Italian Communists who, as the Party of the Democratic Left (PDS), are the core of the left-wing Italian Government formed a year ago, and urged Italy not to turn away Albanian refugees out of "egoism".

Cardinal Ratzinger's seventieth birthday this month was treated as a major event, with two book launches and his photograph on the front cover of *Famiglia Cristiana*, Italy's best-selling Catholic magazine. But the cardinal remains the stern guardian of orthodoxy. Last month he attacked Eastern religions, reflecting the Vatican's fear that many young people are attracted to Oriental faiths. A true dialogue with other faiths should not be "a journey into emptiness" but a search for "the eternal truth revealed in Jesus", the cardinal said.



Cardinal Ratzinger has been a ruthless rooter-out of heresy

St Peter's looks to traditional sponsors

ST PETER'S Basilica is covered in scaffolding. The huge facade of one of the largest churches in Christendom was cleaned only ten years ago. But the Vatican says that it is being "eaten away" by pollution and needs a fundamental facelift for the millennium.

With its pink and grey travertine marble — now sadly stained and grimy — the great basilica is a masterpiece of the Renaissance and Baroque.

Began in 1506 to replace the 4th-century basilica built over St Peter's tomb by the Emperor Constantine, it was completed a century later to designs by Michelangelo, Maderno and Bramante.

Cardinal Virgilio Noe, who is responsible for Vatican buildings, said the Holy See was not seeking external help. "Divine providence and St Peter himself are our best sponsors," he said.

Sarajevo 'plot' hits gunman's job prospects

TALK of an Islamic plot against the Pope has put paid, for the time being, to plans for Mehmet Ali Agca, the Turkish gunman who tried to kill the Pope in May 1981, to gain "semi-liberty".

Agca has been serving a life sentence in Ancona for the past 16 years. He recently applied for a scheme under which well-behaved prisoners are allowed out to work on day release. A Roman Catholic bookshop in the nearby town of Jesi had offered him employment selling Bibles and sacred objects.

The former member of the terrorist Grey Wolves group claims to have repented, and has prayed for forgiveness in his cell with the Pope himself. "Let him come," said Stefano Baldacci, the bookshop owner. "His ideology and past are not important to us."

But Agca admitted this week in *Panorama* magazine that he may have to stay behind bars after the apparent plan to attack the Pope's motorcade in Sarajevo. He said he knew nothing about reported threats to the pontiff's life by "Turkish Muslim fanatics" and described talk of his links to the Mafia as "ridiculous".

Ex-Governor attacks neglect of St Helena

BY MICHAEL BINION, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

A FORMER Governor of St Helena has accused the Foreign Office of prescribing the very medicine that has made the island sick and causing distress by cutting subsidies in a doctrinaire attempt to create a private sector.

Geoffrey Guy, who remained on St Helena for 12 years after retiring in 1981 and now lives in England, criticised the Foreign Office for ignoring his appeals as Governor that Britain should honour the island's charter and restore the right of free access to Britain.

"Each time the standard line, deeply entrenched, was trotted out: 'We must wait until Hong Kong is out of the way before we can consider such a thing.' Hong Kong is now almost out of the way, so what about St Helena?"

Many of the first settlers on St Helena were Londoners who had lost all their possessions in the Great Fire of 1666. Now, Mr Guy said, their descendants felt imprisoned by the surrounding ocean.

Collapse of banks shakes Macedonia

FROM JAMES PETTIFER IN SKOPJE

MACEDONIA appears to be on the brink of a pyramid investment selling scandal similar to the one in Albania.

Bankers and government officials are keeping a close eye on the trial of Sonja Nikolovska, 44, accused of

fraud and other offences in connection with the recent collapse of her TAT bank in Bitola, southwestern Macedonia. About 23,000 investors in TAT, the country's largest private bank, lost a total of DM130 million (£48 million), a vast sum considering that national savings on deposit are believed to total only DM200 million. The past two months have seen the collapse of other, mostly smaller, banks as investment dried up.

Opposition leaders claim that as much as DM60 million of the TAT money were state funds, manipulated by government ministers. Mrs Nikolovska's lawyers say that senior ministers caused the final collapse of her bank by removing large deposits in January and February.

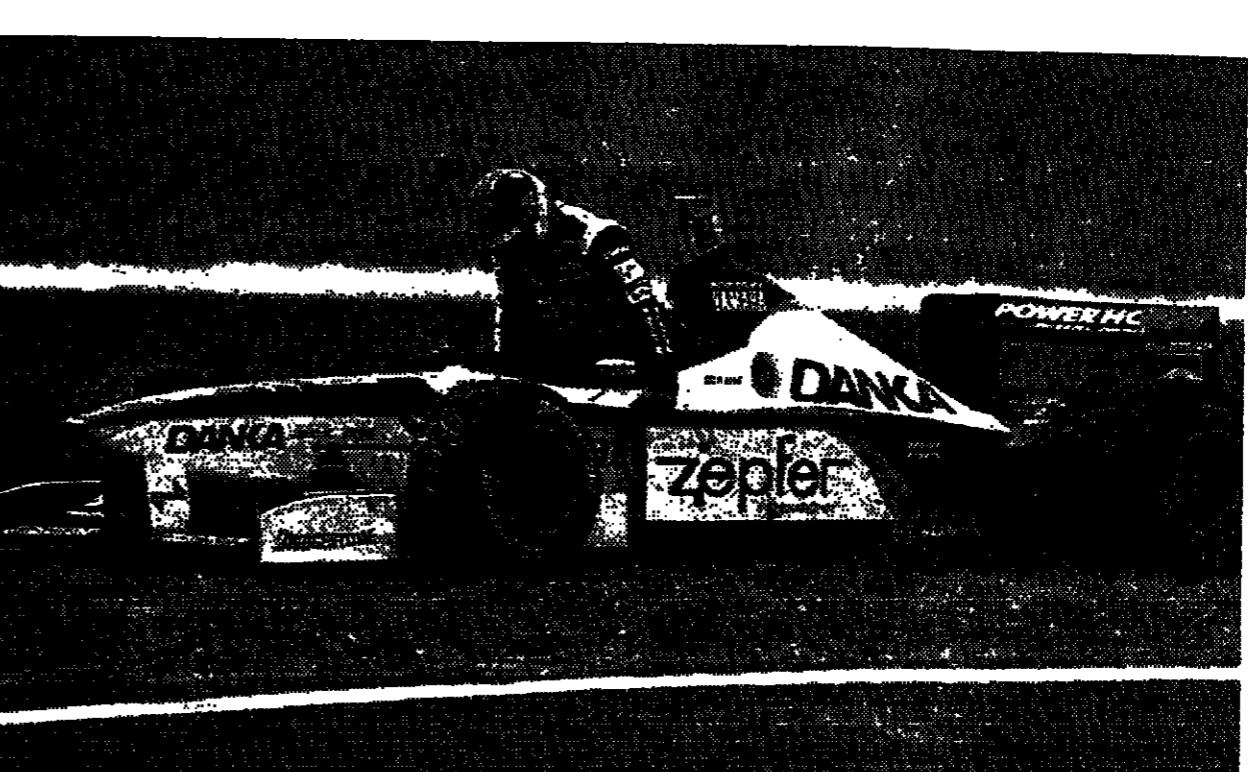
Mrs Nikolovska was yesterday remanded on bail of DM1.1 million. The Government claimed that false records kept by TAT prevented the National Bank from uncovering the crisis until it was too late. The scandal comes at an unwelcome time for the Government of President Cligorov, which has been dogged by allegations of corruption.

10p

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CHANGING TIMES



■ OPINION

Apart from the National Lottery, how else have the Tories changed the landscape of British culture?



■ THEATRE 1

Escape the election: watch Emmanuelle Béart make her British stage debut on Thursday



■ THEATRE 2

A riotous dose of political incorrectness in *Waiting to Inhale* at Stratford East



■ ON MONDAY
Hello, Vegas: U2 unveil their new stage show at the start of a world tour

If the experts tell me that there are "no votes in the arts". That is one reason why this little patch of newsprint has been a blissful no-hustings zone until now. Another reason is that no party has offered an arts policy worth half a cheer. Mind you, Labour's "people's priorities" for the National Lottery, unveiled this week, certainly break new ground in one respect: when was the last time that a party went into an election touting a pledge to remove money from the arts?

But just for the hell of it, let's pretend that there are votes in the arts. Let's look back at the past 18 years under the Tories. Have the good times rolled, or has it been Nightmare in Yobville Manor? Are we kinder to *thespians* and minor poets than we were in 1979, or have we been through a dark night of philistine pillage?

Well, by spook coincidence 1979 was the year in which I first inflicted my preposterous views about "the arts scene" on innocent readers. I looked up some old articles this week, and you know what? If I changed the odd name

here and there I could recycle most of them today, and nobody except my mother would know.

Back then, we were searching for a solution to the problem of London's five symphony orchestras. Approximately 47 solutions later, London still has five orchestras. We were worrying about glossy musicals by Lloyd Webber and others crowding serious drama out of the West End. So guess which shock-horror arts story was in the papers this week?

What else? Theatre directors were predicting the imminent collapse of regional drama. English National Opera and the Royal Opera were taking turns to be in turmoil. Greece wanted its marbles back. British film producers wanted tax breaks. And we were all apparently being depraved beyond redemption by screen violence and sex.

Some things never change. But what has expanded beyond all

recognition is the diversity of our cultural life. You can praise the Tories for this, or you can claim that most of the developments would have happened whatever was running the country. But what you can't do is ignore the implications of this cultural Big Bang. Not if you want to devise a coherent arts policy for the 21st century.

The fact is that, since 1979, leisure choice has been expanded a hundredfold. That's good. But consequently the available punters are being pulled in a hundred new directions. So is the available subsidy. Without proper adjustment, that could be disastrous.

Consider the changes. In 1979 we had only three TV channels. No satellite. Video had arrived, but barely. No ordinary home had a computer. The Internet was but a twinkle in an anorak's eye. Niche radio, such as Classic FM, hadn't been invented. Britain had no multiplex cinemas or theme parks.

IN THE ARTS
RICHARD MORRISON

The Barbican Centre hadn't opened; nor had the new concert halls and galleries now boasted by Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Belfast and many other cities. And Britain's now-flourishing Caribbean and Asian arts scene hardly existed.

In 1979, then, the arts could still be narrowly defined. They could be targeted through relatively few outlets at a sizeable band of the population who still shared the same cultural references. And they faced much less competition.

The Tories didn't increase subsidy to help the arts compete in the brash new world. But they did pull off a couple of useful conjuring tricks. They put political muscle behind the idea of corporate sponsorship — though they never gave sponsors the tax concessions that they get in America.

And of course they inaugurated the lottery. To its supporters it seemed like a painless way, even a "fun" way, to pay for culture. But something went wrong. Somebody (the buck-passing has been wondrous to behold) decided that lottery money could only pay for buildings, not people. In two years it has bankrolled enough pleasure domes to satisfy a thousand Kubla Khans in a hundred Xanadus. Meanwhile, performing ensembles have withered for want of a few thousand quid. The spectacle has left the public bothered and bewildered, but definitely not bewitched. No wonder that Labour senses a vote-winner if it promises to plunder the lottery for homework clubs and designer health-centres.

Ye ultimately the arts are not about finding cash, whether from Taxpayers Frustrated or Gamblers Anonymous. They are about finding people. And this is exactly what they haven't been doing these past 18 years. People have been slipping into comfy relationships with their TVs, computers, video shops, theme parks, bowling alleys. Many have lost their appetite for cultural challenge. Many never had their appetite aroused in the first place.

That is not primarily the fault of

the arts world, though the recent desperate scramble to establish "outreach" projects, "arts for everyone" schemes, "pay what you can" nights and "vouchers for teenagers" does smack of guilt. No, the problem lies deep in our education system. Learning to enjoy art is a bit like learning to swim: if you don't do it early in life, the fear of drowning becomes overwhelming. But the arts are now horribly downgraded in our state education system. The curriculum marginalises them. Peripatetic music teaching has been slashed. Head teachers, fretting about managing their own budgets, no longer regard theatre trips as feasible, or even valuable.

It's all very sad. A generation is being alienated from serious culture before it reaches voting age. For that piece of centralised dumbing-down you must blame the Tories. But for not having a credible plan to reverse the trend you have to despise Labour too. Not much of a choice on Thursday, then. But as we agreed a thousand words ago, there are no votes in the arts. Now I begin to see why.

THEATRE: What can you do on May 1 apart from the obvious? Daniel Rosenthal finds some options. Plus review

Right on, not right-on

GEOFF SCHUMANN, a former school teacher, is big, black and very funny. His revue-style show, *Waiting to Inhale*, is a shameless inversion of Whitney Houston's women-bitching-about-men movie (not to mention Teri Macmillan's novel). *Waiting to Exhale*.

On a stage dominated by a large zebra-skinned sofa, Schumann and his brassy cast (Sandra Bee, Nina Benjamin and Wayne Rollins) pose such indelicate questions as "why do men lie?" In a series of sketches in which men behave badly with women, Schumann cheekily suggests that

Waiting to Inhale
Theatre Royal,
Stratford East

men are always getting the rough end of the stick. Butter doesn't just melt, it dribbles down his chin and all over his powder-blue tent of a shirt.

Schumann's genius is that he divides his audience like a cheese slice. Having incited the males in the auditorium to call him "leader", à la Gary Glitter, he dips into his assortment of Benny Hill-type wigs and conjures up those loaded moments in all relationships: when boy meets girl, why girl should have sex with boy, etc. Because of his bulk and hopelessly see-through patter, the women score heavily, even as the males in the audience cheer his unsophisticated logic.

Somehow it doesn't matter that Schumann is a hopeless actor (his cast outstrip him by miles); it fits neatly with his hopeless sexual dissembling. Sometimes, as in his Barry White routine, he doesn't even bother to tart up the sexism at all. Unbuttoning his vast shirt and threatening to flash his bottom, he ogles a terrified young girl in the audience. I've never seen a revue audience so keen to give an actor a handbagging.

The payoff is that Schumann gets an awful lot more rope to work with. In fact, an entire new character. The cast had more barking than they knew what to do with. "It's just a play," someone shouted deep in the second half. But everyone knew it had long since ceased to be that. Enjoy.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

May 1 will be a day of huge significance for the nation, heralding an event which thousands have been awaiting for years. I refer, of course, to the British stage debut of Emmanuelle Béart, star of *Manon des Sources* and *Mission: Impossible*.

While Peter Snow applies the last few drops of oil to his swingometer, Béart will be preparing for the first of three performances (in French, with surtitles) of Strindberg's *Playing With Fire* at the Nottingham Playhouse.

One of France's most beautiful actresses playing Kerstin, a manipulative Swedish adulteress, in a production from the acclaimed Swiss director Luc Bondy — enough, surely, to entice all but the most Euroscopic theatregoer away from wall-to-wall TV punditry.

Béart's visit was scheduled months ago, so the clash with the election is merely coincidence for the Playhouse's box office. But other venues are wooing voters away from campaign coverage with the theatrical equivalent of tax cuts.

As soon as John Major had named the day, the Bristol Old Vic sent out a mailshot announcing that its box office staff were suffering from "election fever" and would give a discount of up to £16 to anyone buying advance tickets for both *A Taste of Honey* and *The Amen Corner*. "We thought it would give people a good reason to escape from the campaign," says press manager Jane Ellis. "The response was excellent."

At the Tricycle in north London, all seats for the May 1 performance of *The Mai*, Marina Carr's award-winning play about seven Irish women, will cost £2, compared to the normal £7.50-£13. "Read my lips," announces Nicholas Kent, the Tricycle's artistic director. "We will

We're like another bunch of jokers I could mention

Captained by Lee Hurst, a team of eight stand-ups will keep the political gags coming from 11.30pm until "very, very late" in the Comedy Store. At the Riba Architecture Centre, Ralf Ralf (aka brothers Barnaby and Jonathan Stone) will "celebrate the end of six weeks of politicking" with a one-off version of their award-winning satire, *The Summit*.

Those who find actors playing MPs preferable to the real thing can choose from four plays which all provide a historical spin on timeless political issues. In Manchester on May 1, the Royal Exchange has Paul Godfrey's *The Candidate*, which charts the frantic run-up to a provincial polling day in late 19th-century France; while the Opera House hosts Peter Hall's production of *An Ideal Husband*, with Wilde's 1890s Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs facing ruin over an insider trading scandal.



Mark Lundberg (Samson) and Carolyn Sebron (Delilah) in Scottish Opera's excellent staging of Saint-Saëns's work

If Scottish Opera is the company most under threat in these islands, then a success like their first-ever staging of Saint-Saëns's opera should do their morale — and their reputation — a power of good. It's an ideal work with which to display the prowess of orchestra and chorus, and under the idiomatic guidance of the French conductor Frédéric Chaslin both were on sterling form, especially the latter, from their first pianissimo "Dieu", sung flat on their backs both in darkness and in unison.

As with last year's *Idomeneo*, a shortage of funds resulted in a nice balance of virtue and necessity at the Theatre Royal. The designer Antony McDonald also directed



Prettier than Paxman: French actress Emmanuelle Béart is one election-night distraction, making her British stage debut in Sheffield

Stephen Churchill's fine new play, *Tom and Clem*, which brings together the radical Labour MP, Tom Driberg, and Clement Attlee at Potsdam in the aftermath of the latter's 1945 landslide election victory.

At last week's press night, when one character explained that she

had just voted Labour for the first time because "the Tories haven't delivered the goods after all these years", the audience burst into warm applause. Just imagine what the reaction might be next Thursday night.

• The first ten people who call at the Royal Exchange's Albert Square bar

office on May 1 carrying that day's copy of The Times can collect a pair of free tickets for The Candidate (subject to availability). Tel: 0171-228 1000; Box Office 0171-228 5000; Canal Café 0171-289 4054; RIBA 0171-631 0460; Comedy Store 01261-242 2509; Royal Exchange 0161-833 9833; Old Vic 0171-928 7616; Alard 0171-416 6007.

Miles better than run of DeMille

OPERA

Samson et Dalila
Glasgow

Ed. His plain, skewed surfaces brought few surprises and at times seemed almost too austere for a piece usually given the full Cecil B. DeMille treatment. Delilah's residence in the Valley of Soreck did not look inviting — she appeared

to live under a slab of concrete — but once the lighting designer Wolfgang Göbel got to work with his washes of indigo and wine, it became the most seductive of love-nests.

As director, McDonald gently and not-too-specifically updated the action to the time of the Dreyfus Affair, with Abimelech (Christopher Purves) in French army uniform mocking the Hebrews' prayer rituals and deserving everything he got. The company cannot afford dancers, so

the Bacchanale was performed by the chorus as a sort of gluttony ritual, complete with hot towels being handed out (as in business class) before they got down to some serious Jew-baiting. The effect was perfectly horrible, and the way the men were on collars and leads suggested that the Philistines had problems quite apart from being unsound on the arts.

The production, sung in clear French, was imaginatively cast, with two young Americans making their debuts in the title roles. Mark Lundberg, a big man with a big voice, was formerly a baritone and sounds like it. He has retained the weight in his lower register and his new top is fully integrated, easy and unforced, and while he is not the most expressive of actors, he delivered *Vois ma misère* with the soul-searing intensity of a Jon Vickers.

Carolyn Sebron's sumptuous, even mezzo was ideal for Delilah. Her still, statuesque presence was well used by McDonald and together with Lundberg (and Chaslin) she made *Softly awakes my heart* just what it is — one of the sexiest love duets in all opera. Robert Hayward, got up as Rasputin rather than an Archbishop of Paris, made a hair-raisingly barny high priest, every word of his "final solution" aria spat out with crazed venom. A thoroughly invigorating evening.

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RODNEY MILNES

"Where will I find my ideal partner?"

See p.14 Weekend



BELOW THE BELT

Labour will regret its late electioneering on pensions

The Opposition has found it hard to reach a fixed position on pension reform. When Peter Lilley first produced his proposals, Harriet Harman described them as "a really chilling prospect for hard-working families which would certainly spell the end of the basic state pension". Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, recognising that any responsible government would have to do something similar, took a more positive tack. The Labour leader wrote on the opposite page that the plans were a "bold" contribution that would "help whoever forms the next government to conduct the debate more sensibly". Frank Field, then wrote that "Labour should move decisively to claim Peter Lilley's inheritance" and it was reported that his article, for *The Daily Telegraph*, had been edited by Labour campaign managers to remove excess enthusiasm. This week Labour has returned to the Harman approach, adding to it statements which it knows to be false about the Tory threat to the basic state pension.

John Major was personally outraged by this attack. As he made clear in his interview with *The Times*, the commitment to the welfare state is a key part of what he sees as his political spirit and legacy. Although the Tory election machine is no stranger to the dubious allegation, the £12 billion black hole and the double-whammy on tax, for the Prime Minister this new charge was "contemptible" and definitely below the belt.

Labour's assertion that the Conservatives plan to abolish the basic state pension is an absolute lie. It is unedifying to watch Mr Blair and his crew peddling their falsehoods about pensions. These Labour lies are particularly uncomfortable from a Labour leader who has tried to build his reputation on trust and decency. That does not sit easily beside the tactic of terrifying pensioners.

No existing pensioners will lose their basic state pension under the Tory plans. Officially, no one over about 25 will do so — though Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, has left open the option of extending

the scheme to people older than their early twenties. Even those in the new scheme will have their pension levels guaranteed by the government. They will be at least as high as the current state pension uprated in line with prices. If the private pensions taken out by the new generation turn out to be lower, the State will top them up. In other words, the basic pension is not being abolished; it is being replaced, by an alternative that could be worth more, but will not be worth less.

It is possible for Labour to question whether a government in 2040, when the next generation retires, will abide by a guarantee given today by Mr Lilley. No government can bind its successors. But that is a political danger that applies to any long-term pension plan. It is also right for Labour to test the financial strengths or weaknesses of the Conservatives' plans. That is where its arguments have some force.

Mr Lilley's package is a far-reaching attempt to reform British pensions so that, instead of being paid by current workers, they are saved by individuals for their own retirement. But it is also expensive, costing some £7 billion a year at its peak, which comes just at the time when taxpayers will also have to be digging into their pockets to support the pensions and long-term care for those retiring between 2020 and 2040.

The Government claims that these costs can be "taken in our stride"; an attitude that it would not take well from Labour. If the stock markets suffered some "meltdown" and all pensioners had to be topped up by the Treasury, how could the Government afford it? Will the Treasury be putting money aside to cover this possibility? And what will be the implications for public accounting of such an open-ended government guarantee?

These are legitimate questions to be asked of a policy that is right in principle but still poorly understood. Yesterday's verbal abuse will soon be forgotten. The longer lasting aspect will be that Labour has made it harder for itself to undertake in government what it knows in opposition to be necessary.

SPRINGTIME IN PARIS

An entente improbable between sceptics and communists?

The election campaign in France already has all the aspects familiar to ballot-fatigued Britain. The party leaders have hurled insults at each other and cannot agree terms for a televised debate. Accusations of scandal and misuse of office abound. There has not made an appearance, but that is surely a matter of time. Those who booked a holiday in Paris to avoid saturation politics at home may now be less confident of their decision.

Jacques Chirac should be cautious as well. He called this contest despite a sluggish economy and a 60 per cent disapproval rating in the opinion polls. National Assembly battles are unpredictable creatures. On the initial ballot only those few candidates who exceed half the vote are elected. On the second ballot, contenders who have claimed at least one-eighth of support the first time fight it out. The parties of Left and Right normally seek arrangements among each other to avoid division of their final vote. Whether or not they succeed usually determines the outcome.

The President based his gamble on three assumptions. The first is that the slow recovery France has seen will produce dividends at the polls. The second is that, while the two parties of the mainstream Right are broadly united, the Socialists and Communists will prove incapable of an effective electoral pact. Finally, M Chirac believes that the majority of those who align with either the National Front or the Eurosceptic Movement for France in the opening round will return to his camp in the decisive contest.

These assumptions could be undone by the issue — monetary union — that M Chirac has placed at the centre of his

campaign. The voters know that a budget based on spending cuts would follow the Right's re-election. Without such measures France would not meet the Maastricht criteria. A package that might destroy economic growth and boost unemployment may prove an unattractive offer.

Disharmony on the Left stems from different attitudes to the single currency. The Socialists enthused for the euro under François Mitterrand and still claim to do so in principle. But they oppose further austerity to achieve it in practice. The Communists reject EMU and would introduce a referendum on the matter. An impressive Communist showing on the first ballot would oblige the Socialists to move in their direction or accept defeat. They may choose to compromise principles to seize power. Supporters of the National Front and Movement for France would then have little reason to back M Chirac's candidates in the second round.

Any result other than an RPR-UDF triumph would destabilise monetary union. A narrow win for the Right would leave the Eurosceptic faction in a stronger position. A hung parliament could conceivably leave the National Front holding the balance of power. Victory for the Left would put the Communists in the driving seat.

Conservative Eurosceptics in this country are left in a slightly embarrassing situation. The British electorate cannot stop the euro but the French public can. For that the Left must defeat M Chirac. Eurosceptics here require the Communists in France to outperform present expectations — an *entente improbable* but possibly still cordiale.

SWINDON DES RES

This old house could make young prophets as well as profits

The Roman villa unearthed on a building site at Swindon seems to be palatial. Of course, archaeologists turning a new sod can sound as sensational as estate agents with a new property. But the evidence of mosaics, hypocaust underfloor heating, baths and tiered vine terraces points to a palace.

Something on the scale of Fishbourne may lie under this development in an area not previously celebrated for its gracious living or its importance in Roman Britain.

So far the recovery system has worked with the efficiency of ancient Rome in its prime. As required by planning guidelines, the developers have halted their mechanical diggers and called in the archaeologists. Talks with English Heritage and the Swindon council will now work out the best way to find exactly what is there and, if it turns out to be as exciting as it promises, how to preserve it. Swindon could give the developers an alternative site in compensation.

Because of new techniques, more archaeological discoveries are being made in Britain than ever before. The magnetometers and other geometric tools are discovering the street plan of Viroconium, Britain's greenfield Pompeii by Wroxeter. The Palumba development at No 1 Poultry is filling in the jigsaw of Roman London. But however interesting, all this is short-term rescue archaeology on development sites, funded by the developers and carried out by competing commercial archaeological units.

The days of the great research digs, such as Mortimer Wheeler at Maiden Castle or Barry Cunliffe at Fishbourne, have gone.

At Swindon, however, if ground-penetrating radar reveals that substantial remains lie under the tip of the palace that has emerged, there is a chance for something better than hasty dig followed by reckless reburial. For the relics of the past can be a tourist attraction as well as an educational inspiration. Fewer pupils now learn their Latin irregular verbs. But primary schoolchildren who study Romans in the national curriculum know all about hypocausts and procurators. Thousands more study classics, archaeology, architecture and art at secondary school and university.

The architect Nicholas Wood's project to rebuild the 2,000-year-old House of the Tragic Poet at Pompeii in Britain as a commercial venture is attracting international interest. Replica mosaics, roof tiles and furniture have already been made for this villa, which was the inspiration of Bulwer Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii*. The committee has applied for a site at Greenwich. Now the developers at Swindon may have turned up an early native example of their trade. Preserving or restoring the Swindon villa could create a tourist attraction as well as a wonder of Wiltshire. So it might prove quite as proper a use of lottery money for education as homework clubs or literacy centres — and much more fun.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Major's faults, achievements and capacity to govern

From Mr Lewis Stretch

Sir, Anatole Kaletsky ("Major is just not up to the job", April 22) is quite correct to point out that John Major's "leadership" has made the present Government the least electable for 50 years and created the possibility of a dangerously massive Labour victory. Yet the validity of his analysis exposes the falsity of his claim that Tony Blair's capacity to fill the office better is "another matter".

On the contrary, it is the heart of the matter; it is the main problem the electorate has to solve, despite the efforts of the party spin doctors to obscure it. It is simply not true that the only argument for democracy is that it can eject poor governments, regardless of whether the alternative on offer is any better.

Despite Tony Blair's attempt to pretend that "new" Labour is simply Thatcherism with a friendly face, his boast of domination of his party is manifestly hollow. Old socialists and union barons are very much alive, and merely keeping quiet to lull the electorate into granting them a new lease of life. Indeed, a large Labour majority might well open the way to a similar coup to that by which Ken Livingstone acquired the leadership of the GLC in 1981.

The ideal outcome of this election would be a Parliament so comprehensively hung that the long-tempered and urgently-needed breaking of the current party moulds occurs, and voters are once again given a genuine choice on key issues. As it is now clear that the biggest of these on May 1 is re-

versing Maggie Thatcher's sleep-walk into King Kohl's "Union of Roman Socialist Republics", a strong contingent of conservative (Tory, Liberal, Labour or fringe) sceptics is essential.

Yours faithfully,
LEWIS STRETCH,
3 Laroc Close,
Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire.
April 22.

From Lord Harris of High Cross

Sir, Anatole Kaletsky acknowledges, rather temperately I thought, that the Government can claim "numerous worthy achievements", including deflating inflation and running a sensible economic policy. Yet the moment turns to party politics, all show of temperance departs.

In his effort to portray the Government as "the least electable for 50 years", he ransacks the beginner's guide to polite abuse and comes up with "farces and fiascos... tragicomic asymmetry... politically ineffectual leadership" etc.

"Least electable for 50 years"? Where was Mr Kaletsky in the Wilson era? Does he remember George Brown's National Plan or Crossman's national superannuation or Barbara Castle's *In Place of Strife* or Crosland's destruction of grammar schools, to say nothing of Red Robbo, Solomon Binding and the winter of discontent?

Mr Kaletsky's prediction of the greatest electoral landslide for 50 years" recalls several of his treasured economics columns in which he tries vainly to explain away his own earlier

what the NFU's current leaders have done, as their stewardship of the BSE crisis has demonstrated.

I have a different view from Sir Simon. The present Government has faced the deepest crisis to hit British agriculture in living memory with both fortitude and generous support. I believe that many farmers who would have gone under but for the rescue measures taken by the Government will remember that when they come to cast their vote.

In his letter, Sir Simon criticises the present Government's performance on agriculture, notably over the BSE crisis, and concludes that the Conservatives have forfeited the right to the support of the farming community. Like the rest of us, Sir Simon is of course entitled to vote as he deems fit.

As the leading organisation representing farmers, the NFU has continued to maintain a strictly neutral position on party politics. It must be free to criticise or praise the government of the day, and more importantly work with it for the benefit of the food and agricultural industry. That is exactly

what the NFU does.

Yours faithfully,

DEREK MARTIN
(Member of Board,

Thames Water, 1981-83).

Cobble Wood Cottage,

Medmenham,

Marlow, Buckinghamshire.

April 23.

From Lord Mackay of Clashfern, Lord Chancellor

Sir, I do not accept the account of my views given by Mr Magnus Linklater ("Wrecker on the woolsack", April 24) on how the House of Lords might scrutinise any future preliminary referendum Bill. I particularly reject the assertion that my view appears to challenge the right of the Scottish electorate to decide its own constitutional future.

My view is that decisions upon any Bill that may be put before Parliament for a referendum in Scotland should be made in the light of all the circumstances then prevailing.

However, in answer to questions from journalists I have said that if a two-question referendum Bill is proposed I would think it is essential that the arrangements on which the questions arise should be made clear in the Bill.

I give three examples of what I have in mind. If an assembly with tax-varying powers is proposed for Scotland, what would be the effect of establishing such an assembly on the financial arrangements between Scotland and the United Kingdom? What is the difference in this aspect between Scotland and Wales? Would Scottish ministers be answerable to the assembly have senior status only in European discussions instead of being members of the United Kingdom ministerial team, as Scottish ministers are now?

In the last paragraph of your first letter (same day), speaking of Mr Blair, you say:

But he is still light-fingered on the two most important issues for the next Parliament: devolution and the single currency.

Between now and May 1, the voters want to hear cool clarity, not warm words.

So far as devolution is concerned this expresses succinctly what I have argued.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES MACKAY,

Suite 1/1,

14 Links Place, Edinburgh.

April 25.

From Mr Martin Cosgrove

Sir, Laurel and Hardy have remained loved over the years. They have stood the test of time.

Laura may live to regret, in opposition, the superimposition of the faces of Mr Major and Mr Clarke in *The Times* (report and pictures, April 22).

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN COSGROVE,
11 Wainlong Road,
Salisbury, Wiltshire.

April 23.

From Mr Robert Bond

Sir, My most recent postal election communication came this morning. It was perhaps the most profound message I have received so far. The envelope was empty.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT BOND,
11 Wainlong Road,
Salisbury, Wiltshire.

April 24.

From Mr Peter M. Wright

Sir, Eight hours of results (groan), swingometers (argh), Paxman (ugh). As my late grandfather advised of general elections: "Don't vote, it only encourages them."

Yours faithfully,
PETER M. WRIGHT,
Whinhurst,
Portencross,
West Kilbride, Ayrshire.

April 24.

From Mr Lewis Stretch

Sir, Anatole Kaletsky ("Major is just not up to the job", April 22) is quite correct to point out that John Major's "leadership" has made the present Government the least electable for 50 years and created the possibility of a dangerously massive Labour victory. Yet the validity of his analysis exposes the falsity of his claim that Tony Blair's capacity to fill the office better is "another matter".

On the contrary, it is the heart of the matter; it is the main problem the electorate has to solve, despite the efforts of the party spin doctors to obscure it. It is simply not true that the only argument for democracy is that it can eject poor governments, regardless of whether the alternative on offer is any better.

Despite Tony Blair's attempt to pretend that "new" Labour is simply Thatcherism with a friendly face, his boast of domination of his party is manifestly hollow. Old socialists and union barons are very much alive, and merely keeping quiet to lull the electorate into granting them a new lease of life. Indeed, a large Labour majority might well open the way to a similar coup to that by which Ken Livingstone acquired the leadership of the GLC in 1981.

The ideal outcome of this election would be a Parliament so comprehensively hung that the long-tempered and urgently-needed breaking of the current party moulds occurs, and voters are once again given a genuine choice on key issues. As it is now clear that the biggest of these on May 1 is re-

versing Maggie Thatcher's sleep-walk into King Kohl's "Union of Roman Socialist Republics", a strong contingent of conservative (Tory, Liberal, Labour or fringe) sceptics is essential.

Yours etc,
LEWIS STRETCH,
5 Carlton Close,
Wood Street, Barnet, Hertfordshire.
April 22.

From Lord Harris of High Cross

Sir, Anatole Kaletsky asserts that the Government is not up to the job and should not be re-elected.

But he also asserts that John Major is liked by the voters, has defeated inflation, run a sensible economic policy after Britain left the exchange-rate mechanism and steered a pragmatic course in relations with Europe. Some of your readers might think that these three issues of policy are the most important facing the country today and, combined with Mr Major's popularity and decency, make the case for re-election.

Mr Kaletsky's debit list is made up of what he himself describes as a catalogue of tactical errors adding up, he believes, to ineffective leadership. The leadership required to produce what Mr Kaletsky himself acknowledges as the Government's achievements is of a far higher calibre than the supposed tactical errors he plays in aid — each one of which, incidentally, is open to challenge.

Yours faithfully,

TRISTAN GAREL-JONES

(MP for Watford (Conservative))

1979-97,

12 Catherine Place, SW1.

April 23.



COURT CIRCULAR

WINDSOR CASTLE
April 25: The Duke of Edinburgh, Colonel-in-Chief, this evening attended the Annual Dinner of the Intelligence Corps at the Painters' Hall, Little Trinity Lane, London EC4.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh were represented by the Lord Bessborough [Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk] at the Memorial Service for Sir Joshua Rowley, Bt (formerly Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk) which was held in St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, today.

The Prince of Wales was represented by the Lord Tollerance.

The Princess Royal was represented by the Countess of Lichfield.

Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, was represented by Mrs Michael Harvey.

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were represented by Major Nicholas Barne.

The Duke and Duchess of Kent

were represented by Mr Andrew Palmer.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

April 25: The Princess Royal, Colonel-in-Chief, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment), today visited the 1st Battalion at the Cinque Ports Training Area, Lydd Camp, Kent.

KENSINGTON PALACE

April 25: The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon was present this evening at a Concert and Dinner, held in aid of the St George's School, Windsor Castle, Development Campaign, at the Royal Naval College Greenwich.

Her Royal Highness was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London (Field Marshal The Lord Bramall, KG).

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE

April 25: Princess Alexandra and the Rt Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy, today attended the Memorial Service for Sir Joshua Rowley, Bt which was held in Bury St Edmunds' Cathedral, Suffolk.

Christening

The second son of Mr and Mrs Merlin Hutchings was baptized Mylo Arthur Hinton by Canon Joseph Robinson, Master of the Temple, at the Temple Church on Sunday, April 20, 1997. The godparents are Juliette Quintin-Archedar, Caroline Weaver, Hugh Harvey-Kelly, Barry Leighton and Andrew Culshaw.

Mill Hill School

Term started on Monday, April 21. Matron Frise is Senior Monitor and Marc Dweck, Captain of Cricket. The School is pleased to announce that it has won a European Curriculum Award for its "English Initiative" programme. The Bishop of Edmonton will preach at Confirmation Service on May 19. Old Millbillians Day will be held on June 22 when all former pupils from the years 1970-80 are invited to lunch (further details from the Headmaster's Secretary). The Challenge of Leadership will take place from June 23 to 26. The 1st XI will leave for their cricket tour to the North of England on July 1. End of term will be July 3.

Kelly College

Mr D.W. Ball, MBE, MA, Headmaster of Kelly College, Tavistock, from 1972 to 1985, has been appointed a Governor.

Appointments in the Forces

Royal Air Force

GROUP CAPTAIN: R H Kinzentz - HQ DCSA 24.4.97

WING COMMANDER: G A Bowmer - Dryad MWC 14.4.97;

A J Boyd - D of Defence Progs 14.4.97; B 2 Cunningham - RAF Akrotiri, 14.4.97; M V Godfrey - SHAPE Int Staff, 14.4.97; D J Keenan - MOD 14.4.97; A T Bate - RAF Benson, 25.4.97; R Ashen-hurst - RAF Coltishall, 30.4.97.

Royal Marines Association

The Mayor and Councillors of Dover, the Alderman of Zeebrugge and Mr David Shaw attended wreath laying ceremonies in Dover yesterday to mark the raid on the Zeebrugge Mole. The Rev Basil Watson led the prayers. Lord Keyes, Lieutenant-Colonel H.H. Player, RMR, Colonel R. Burford, HAC, and members of the City of London branch of the Royal Marines Association were present.

World Traders

The following have been elected officers of the Company of World Traders for the ensuing year:

Master, Mr David Ward, Senior Warden, Mr Peter Wildbord, Junior Warden, Mr Alderman Roger Cork.

Anniversaries

TODAY: Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor, 161-180 AD; Romeo, 121; Leonardo da Vinci, painter, sculptor, architect and engineer, Vinci, 1452; John James Audubon, naturalist and artist, Les Cayes, Santo Domingo, 1783; Alfred Krupp, industrialist, Essen, 1812; Artemus Ward (pen name of Charles Farrar Brownlow), writer, Waterville, Maine, 1834; Syngman Rhee, 1st President of the Republic of Korea, 1948-60; Kuangsu, 1875; Rudolf Hess, Nazi war criminal, Alexandria, Egypt, 1944; John Grierson, documentary film producer, Perth, 1898.

DEATHS: Jeremy Collier, controversialist, London, 1726; Carl Bosch, chemist, Nobel laureate 1931, Heidelberg, 1940; Sir Edward, actor, Sunderland, 1970; Dame Cicely Courtneidge, actress, London, 1980; William (Count) Basie, jazz bandleader and pianist, Florida, 1984.

The Great Plague began in London, 1665.

John Wilkes Booth, actor, the assassin of President Lincoln (April 14), was shot dead by troops, 1865.

The Duke of York (later King George VI) married Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon in Westminster Abbey, 1923.

An accident at the Soviet nuclear power station at Chernobyl led to far-reaching increases in radiation levels, 1986.

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The London Zoological Gardens opened, Regents Park, 1828.

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OBITUARIES

Peter Earle, reporter, died on April 6 aged 71. He was born on November 4, 1925.

As an investigative reporter, Peter Earle was without peer. Over a 25-year period his scoops for the *News of the World* embraced gangland murders, organised crime, high-class vice rings, Cold War intrigues, espionage and infidelities of politicians.

Earle's inquiry into a call-girl network organised by society osteopath Stephen Ward snowballed into the Profumo affair, the biggest scandal of the 1960s. It was the first of many front-page stories he obtained for the *News of the World* which he joined when the paper absorbed the *Empire News*.

Stafford Somerfield, then Editor of the *News of the World*, was at first bemused by Earle's Dickensian mannerisms. But he quickly realised he had taken on board someone special. When exasperated executives complained that Earle had not been seen in the office for days he would beam, "He must be on something big. He'll surface in his own time," he would reply. And Earle justified his confidence with a string of exclusives. For

months a *Daily Express* reporter was assigned to spend evenings in the Tipperary bar in Fleet Street, one of Earle's haunts, to eavesdrop on his conversations.

He had an amazing network of contacts whose identities he assiduously guarded. A colleague who occupied an adjacent desk in the newsroom of the *News of the World* in Bow Street often took his calls. "It's Barney the Snake," a voice would rasp. "Tell him to be in the usual place." Or it could be Black Rod, the Fiery Horseman, Marley's Ghost, the Old Pretender or the Brigadier, all anxious to confide in Earle because they trusted him.

Barney the Snake, in fact, was a wealthy property developer who had once been an enforcer for Jack "Spot" Connyn, a London gang-leader in the 1950s. The Fiery Rovers and Black Rod worked in the Lord Chancellor's Office. Senior Scotland Yard detectives, barristers, men from MI5 and MI6 and a host of Soho denizens were also among his contacts. It was an MI5 man who told Earle that Georgi Markov, a Bulgarian dissident found dead near Aldwych Tube station, did not die from a heart attack but had been mur-

dered by an East German political assassin who used a poison tipped umbrella.

When he heard from an underworld contact that a notorious gang of south London villains had resorted to torturing people they did not care for, Earle began a one-man crusade. Because the gang had friends at Scotland Yard who tipped them off about police inquiries, an outsider Gerald McArthur, an assistant Chief Constable of Hertfordshire, was secretly called in by the Home Office to investigate.

He had weekly meetings with Earle who updated him on the Richardson gang's activities. The inquiry ended in the sensational torture trial at the Old Bailey when evidence of electric shock torture and the extraction of teeth and toenails by a homicidal lunatic shocked Britain.

Earle was the first reporter to recognise the menace of the Kray twins who were showing an interest in the mushrooming gaming scene in London. The profits were sufficient to interest the New York mafia who sent a team of lawyers to check and, if reports were favourable, arrange dealings with the Krays. Film tough guy, George

Raft, heavily in debt to the mob, was sent from New York as celebrity host at one club. The profits from unrestricted gaming were enormous but when shooters and champagne corks started popping simultaneously something had to be done.

A man from the Home Office contacted Earle. "The Home Secretary reckons you know more about this business than anyone. What's your advice?" After giving a comprehensive rundown of the gambling scene, Earle said: "Tell the Home Secretary he can start by making Mr Raft a prohibited immigrant."

A few weeks later, Raft, who usually played a gangster in his Warner Brother days, was deported from Britain.

Earle, a kindly, courteous and humorous man, made daily excursions into shady Soho clubs, seedy pubs, expensive West End bars and nightclubs. He was once taunted by a detective, Earle spotted him in a third pub and led him all over London by taxi. In the 13th pub he ordered his usual large Scotch and instructed the bartender to send one to the chap in the corner with the message: "I'm heading for the Shakespeare and I'll be in the Wig and Pen by 5.30."

"My dear fellow, if you need confirmation I'll be happy to supply it," Earle, a 60-cigarette-a-day man, assured him.

In keeping with his eccentric character, Peter Earle had the unusual distinction during the Second World War of serving in both the RAF and then the Army Intelligence Corps in India.

The Wig and Pen, one of Earle's favourite watering holes, used to be festooned with cartoons of Fleet Street eccentrics and characters. A drawing of Earle was on the wall alongside the likes of crime novelist Edgar Wallace and press baron Lord Northcliffe.

He was once dispatched to interview a titled lady about her troubled matrimonial situation.

"But how do I know you are from the *News of the World*?" she asked him suspiciously. Earle spread his arms in despair. "Madam," he retorted testily, "I've already admitted it."

Peter Earle, who retired to Dorset, leaves a widow, Hazel, a son and three daughters.



JEAN LOUIS

Jean Louis, costume designer, died in Palm Springs, California, on April 20 aged 89. He was born in Paris on October 5, 1907.

HOLLYWOOD fashion in the 1940s and 1950s was dominated by a handful of designers, among them the tiny, energetic Edith Head at Paramount and the courtly Parisian Jean Louis at Columbia. Despite spending most of his life on the West Coast of America, Louis always managed to sound as though he had just stepped off the plane from France.

Numerous showstopping gowns flowed from his atelier at Columbia, where he was chief designer for twenty years. Two passed into showbusiness history. The first was worn by Rita Hayworth in *Gilda* (1946), as she shimmied her way through the nightclub number *Put the Blame on Mame*. It was a black satin strapless gown with matching gloves, one of which she peeled off and tossed to the howling audience. The dress started a fashion trend which has still not gone out of style.

The other was the sparkling dress which Marilyn Monroe wore for her breathless rendition of *Happy Birthday* to President John F. Kennedy at Madison Square Garden in 1962. This had taken months to prepare and required Monroe to undergo several fittings. There were no zips — on the evening she had to be sewn into it, giving new meaning to the term figure-hugging — and it certainly made an arresting spectacle for those watching. Hundreds of strategically placed brilliants shimmered over the flesh-coloured cloth. Under the spotlight, Monroe seemed to be clothed in nothing but reflected light.

Jean Louis Berthault trained under the designer Agnes Dorell in Paris. He took a holiday in New York in 1935, casually submitted his sketches to the Hattie Carnegie design firm and was asked to stay. The suit which he



Rita Hayworth in *Gilda* (1946) shimmers her way through the nightclub number *Put the Blame on Mame*

designed for them in 1937 — consisting of a fitted buttoned jacket with narrow waist and long narrow skirt — was worn by all the fashionable American women that year: the Duchess of Windsor and Mrs Harry Cohn among them. The latter's husband was the founder of Columbia and, at

her urging, Jean Louis was brought to Hollywood in 1944 and installed as chief designer for the studio.

For several years, he was the only dress designer to receive a full film credit: "Gowns by Jean Louis". He was nominated 14 times for an Oscar, for work on, among

others, *Born Yesterday*, *From Here to Eternity*, *A Star is Born*, *Pal Joey*, *Bell Book and Candle* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. He finally won it for dressing Judy Holliday in *The Solid Gold Cadillac* (1956).

The other platform for his work during the 1950s was *The Loretta Young Show*, which ran on NBC. Loretta Young, who was his wife Maggy's best friend (and later his second wife), chose Louis as her designer for 52 episodes: "I learnt never, ever to tell him what I wanted, what colour, what shape. I learnt to tell him only how I wanted to feel and what time of day the scene was. It always worked." Indeed, it worked so well that many women who watched the show did so only to find out what Loretta Young would be wearing next.

With the waning of the studio system in the early 1960s, Jean Louis left Columbia, set up a salon in Beverly Hills and freelanced. Actresses continued to insist in their contracts that he would be their designer on a film, not least because he was expert at disguising flaws in a woman's figure. They also appreciated the dramatic touches of a Jean Louis original, the long trains, for example, which were then used by most contemporary designers only on wedding gowns.

Louis continued to work with his old friend Marlene Dietrich. For her latterday career as a Las Vegas chanteuse, he designed those disturbingly transparent gowns which managed to make her look as if she was wearing nothing but jewels and fur.

In 1980 Nancy Reagan gave him Washington's seal of approval when she wore his black silk jacquard dress on the night her husband was elected President. *The New York Times* called it "the landslide look".

Jean Louis retired in 1988. His first wife predeceased him in 1987 and in 1993 he married his friend Loretta Young, who survives him. There were no children.

Sir Thomas Bazley, Bt, country landowner, died on April 14 aged 89. He was born on October 5, 1907.

THOMAS BAZLEY, according to friends, wrote his own epitaph. He had, he would frequently say, "lived every minute of every day of every year" — and it was not technically true, he certainly spent much of his time trying to make it so. He was one of the last of his kind. Inheriting a Cotswold estate embracing 4,000 acres and three whole villages, he was free to indulge his every interest and whim — of which there were many.

They included alternative medicine and organic farming, architecture, conservation, classical music, current affairs and politics. He so impressed Harold Macmillan when they met that the Prime Minister offered to find him a safe seat. He was nonplussed when Bazley replied that not only did he not have the time, but he was a deeply committed Liberal.

A vegetarian who fortified his diet with vitamin pills, he helped to found the highly successful Marigold Health Foods, of which he remained a director until his death. He recently completed a book on alternative medicine.

But perhaps his greatest contribution to posterity was the conservation of his Gloucestershire estate. Not only did he have to approve all building work, insisting on the use of local stone, but he sought to preserve its lifestyle — without restraining too much the local economy.

He encouraged modern architecture where appropriate,

firmly attacking the apostles of neo-Georgianism. He had

SIR THOMAS BAZLEY, Bt

aspired to be an architect himself, but confessed that the maths involved would have been too much for him. As it was he contented himself with his own schemes. He had one house built in a wood, aptly named The Folly, and designed his own solar-heated swimming pool. It worked, his family agreed — up to a point.

He was born Thomas Stafford Bazley at Hatherop Castle, a one-time Elizabethan manor house overlooking the River Coln, which, however, has been rebuilt in the last century. Edward VII had considered it when looking for a country retreat, but eventually opted for Sandringham which offered better shooting.

The Bazleys were relatively new to the landed gentry. Thomas's great-grandfather was a Victorian philanthropist who made a fortune out of cotton mills in Lancashire before serving as a Liberal MP for 22 years. Gladstone's letter in 1869 conferring the baronetcy is still among the family memorabilia.

Thomas's father died when he was four, and eight years later he inherited the title from his grandfather. He therefore went as the third baronet to Harrow, which he detested, and Magdalen College, Oxford, to read politics, philosophy and economics. His Oxford contemporaries included Douglas Jay who became a close lifelong friend. Ill health forced him to come down without taking his degree, however — a disappointment he never quite got over.

For the same reason he was passed unfit for the Armed Forces during the war. He worked for the intelligence services and the Ministry of Information instead and spent part of the war at Bletchley

Park. A prodigious memory was among his assets.

Hatherop Castle had been used as a training ground for Special Operations Executive agents during the war — and later became a preparatory school. Bazley therefore returned in 1945 to live elsewhere on the estate.

More recently still he moved into Eastleach Down Farm, where he started to introduce organic methods. While driving in Manchester he once found himself passing a street called Bazley Street. He bought the street sign from the

pianist and composer Francis Renau.

He entertained frequently and well, spending hours over the guest lists in order to ensure a good mix. Himself a voracious reader of the broadsheets he expected the same of his guests whom he liked to catch out with riddles based on the news. He wrote to the papers, including *The Times*, hardly less often than he read them. His favourite theme was a stream of invective against the Tories — especially his *bête noire* Margaret Thatcher.

A lean, wiry, bespectacled man with a huge sense of fun, he saw himself as living proof of the benefits of alternative medicine. He was still playing badminton at 87. He reluctantly wore a hearing aid in later years, but mislaid it daily. He therefore turned up the volume of his stereo until the house vibrated with music, from Beethoven to Bartok.

He was however a notoriously bad driver, amassing a total of 42 motoring offences. He once stopped to ask the way of a policeman, who promised to tell him if he would drive his car off his foot. Kind and generous to a fault and incurably stubborn, he sometimes acknowledged his shortcomings, promising to pay more heed to those around him before indulging his latest caprice.

He met his wife Carmen during the war when, after serving as a dispatch rider, she worked as a tri-lingual secretary in his department. They married in 1945 and Sir Thomas Bazley, who died while happily planning for his 90th birthday celebrations later this year, is survived by her, their three sons and two daughters.

council and erected it on his drive.

He supported a number of charities. These included the Noah's Ark Venture, set up in his grounds, where deprived children from London spent country holidays. Anka Rice opened an extension there last year.

He also patronised the arts, especially music, inviting young musicians to give concerts in the grounds. Nigel Kennedy was among them. More recently Bazley had been helping the young Belize

part in the life of his Church. He was a governor of the Holy Family Convent in Enfield, 1984-89. He was also a member of the Thomas More Society. One of the last public functions he attended was the celebration in Manchester of the 50 years work of the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, of which he was chairman, 1981-83. The Papal Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice was conferred upon him in 1986.

He married in 1955 a fellow student at Exeter, Margaret Smeaton, with whom he had ten children. His family and the theatre — he was a talented amateur actor and singer — were, apart from the law, his two great interests in life. His wife, seven daughters and two of his three sons survive him.

AS THE circuit judge at Ilford, John Burkett Baker brought to every case a determination that the parties before him should know that their dispute had been fully considered. His shrewd and fair approach to his work earned him a reputation as an excellent judge.

Yet he was originally intended for the Roman Catholic priesthood, and it was only while he was studying with the White Fathers at Bishop's Waltham that he changed course. He then entered University College, Exeter, where he read law.

In 1970, he became a Deputy Chairman of Shropshire Quarter Sessions and later a

Crown Court Recorder. In 1975, he took Silk.

Against this background he was a natural choice for the circuit bench, to which he was appointed in 1977. Over the following years, he sat in the chambers of Michael Talbot at Essex Court in the Temple. He soon acquired a good Common Law practice on what was then the Oxford Circuit. His thorough preparation of his cases, incisive cross-examination, and concise submissions in plain language, with an occasional shaft of dry wit, were attractive to judges and jurors alike.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY APRIL 26 1997

RK



Headlines for rappers and pop stars from Philip Pass, managing director of Kangol, left, and Andrew Hartley, with models Sarah Penman and Jo Whitaker

Kangol buyout for £30m

By ADAM JONES

KANGOL Group, the hat maker whose products adorn the heads of pop stars, has been bought by its managers for £30 million.

The buyout was backed by £10.5 million from Kleinwort Benson. Kangol, founded in 1938, made a profit of £3.5 million before interest and tax last year. It was previously owned by the Marmon Corporation, a private industrial company belonging to the Pritzker family of Chicago.

The buyout will lead to expansion in Kangol's licensing activity. While it sold about \$40 million of its headwear worldwide last year, sales of licensed products, including shoes, bags and casual wear, were about \$100 million. Kangol gets a 5 to 7 per cent cut of the smaller wholesale value in these deals.

Japan is an important market. Andrew Hartley, a director of Kleinwort Benson Development Capital and a new Kangol board member, said the Japanese found the Kangaroo emblem "cute".

He said the surging popularity of Kangol hats among US rappers and UK celebrities such as Liam Gallagher, the Oasis singer, had helped boost sales last year.

Senior debt financing and working capital facilities, worth £18.9 million, were provided by NatWest Markets.

Airbus in merger talks with Lockheed

By OLIVER AUGUST

AIRBUS INDUSTRIE is holding merger talks with Lockheed Martin, the leading American aerospace group. The link-up is aimed at combatting Boeing's global dominance in aviation.

Talks between Lockheed and Airbus have involved Yves Michot, chief executive of Aérospatiale, and Norman Augustine, chairman of Lockheed, which is the world's biggest defence conglomerate, with sales of \$27 billion last year. Airbus' turnover was \$8.8 billion last year, down from \$9.6 billion in 1995.

A full merger would be impossible before Airbus converts from a multinational consortium to become a single company in 1999. But the two companies are looking at ways of co-operating in advance of

deals." Last December, Boeing agreed a \$13 billion merger with McDonnell Douglas of America. Together they currently hold 70 per cent of the world civil aviation market.

Insiders expect Airbus and Lockheed to build a strong project-by-project alliance before attempting a corporate link-up. The two groups are poised to announce groundbreaking agreements on some of the world's most important aerospace projects. Lockheed is set to become a risk-sharing partner in the \$10 billion development of Airbus' superjumbo.

James Blackwell, president and chief operating officer of Lockheed's aeronautical division, said: "We are pursuing opportunities with Airbus. We will look at every opportunity afforded to Lockheed Martin and will always be interested in making good business

announcements expected shortly after the granting of \$1.1 billion of US Government development aid.

Lockheed and BAe also joined forces earlier this month to compete for the \$5 billion contract for a battlefield reconnaissance vehicle, described as the modern equivalent of the Cavalry's Indian scout.

The transatlantic merger would coincide with the launch of the superjumbo. The 800-seater is expected to get the final go-ahead in 1999. Its main market is America and Lockheed's participation in the production process would increase the sales potential.

Airbus recently said it was looking for a North American partner to take on up to 15 per cent of the superjumbo investment and development.

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Raider to pay Co-op damages

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE Co-operative Wholesale Society emerged victorious from a High Court hearing yesterday at which the judge described Andrew Regan's aborted £1.2 billion takeover bid as "clearly dishonest" and based on "a serious, gross and wilful breach of confidence".

Mr Justice Lightman upheld an injunction banning Mr Regan and his associates from using material obtained from Allen Green, the CWS executive suspended last week. He also said Mr Green, Mr Regan, his business partner David Lyons, and their companies Galileo and Larica Trust should pay punitive "indemnity" costs to CWS, expected to run into tens of thousands of pounds.

CWS is also seeking damages in the courts, which it said "will run into millions".

The judge agreed that Hambleton Bank, which advised Mr Regan on the bid, be added to the civil action. Hambleton declined to comment.

According to Brian Keelan, the SBC Warburg banker who led the CWS campaign, an attempt was made to halt the whole process early this week. "Our side went to them on Monday with a file of information and said you had better close it all down, and they didn't," he said. Although Mr Keelan would not specify, it is believed that, at the meeting, CWS solicitors showed Hambleton some of the incriminating material they had gathered on Galileo and Mr Regan.

CWS is also planning civil action against Travers Smith Braithwaite, Galileo's lawyers. Travers, which is expected to resign as Galileo's lawyers, said: "We will resist most strongly any claim which may be made against us." It emerged in court that many

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TRUST WATCH

MARTIN CURRIE



A red rag to a bull market?

The Chinese flag will soon replace the Union Jack in Hong Kong. But what will happen to the economic complexion of the colony? How will companies fare after the changeover? Will investors be seeing red? Martin Currie thinks not.

After all, Hong Kong companies have been investing in China for many years. And Chinese companies – the 'red chips' – are already listed on the Hong Kong stock exchange.

But whatever happens – in South East Asia or elsewhere in the world – you can be sure that Martin Currie will be applying their long-established international investment skills to full advantage. (So no change there.)



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INSIGHT ON INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT

Martin Currie Investment Management Ltd, Saline Court, 20 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2ES. Regulated by IMRO.

TT 12

MG to pay victims total of £220m

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

MORGAN GRENfell is to pay 200,000 investors a total of £220 million compensation, equivalent to an average £1,000 each, for losses in the Peter Young affair.

The first slice of compensation to 80,000 direct investors in the three European trusts affected will be paid on Tuesday in either a cheque or units credited to their holdings.

More than 70 per cent of investors have opted for units. A further 120,000 investors in nominee accounts will be compensated in coming months.

The news comes just a week after Morgan Grenfell was fined £2 million, plus £1 million costs, for breaches of City rules after Mr Young used investors' money to buy unlisted securities.

The compensation is based not on the trusts' previous track record as among the best in their sector, but on a comparison with the sector average. This will disappoint investors, who put £83 million into the trusts in 1995 to make the most of personal equity plan allowances. The best

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Economic growth at two-year high

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE economy grew at its fastest rate for more than two years in the first quarter of 1997, led by the booming service sector.

Gross domestic product grew at an annual rate of 3 per cent, compared with 2.7 per cent in the last quarter of 1996, according to data published yesterday by the Office for National Statistics.

The quarterly GDP growth rate also rose from 0.8 per cent to 1 per cent in the first quarter.

Service sector growth was especially strong, rising 1.2 per cent for the second quarter running and taking the annual rate to 3.9 per cent. But manufacturing sector growth remains sluggish, increasing an estimated 0.6 per cent in the first quarter – half the service sector rate.

Economists said the figures, which were slightly above expectations, are likely to increase Bank of England pressure on an incoming Chancellor to raise rates by as much as 0.5 per cent at the first post-election monetary meeting on

now it was understood that the MMC would have the last word in a dispute between a company and its regulator.

Mr McIlmoor said he intended to "largely accept the commission's proposals" but was not minded to accept transmission and distribution price controls without an adjustment. He plans a month-long consultation period before deciding the price curbs.

Dr Patrick Haren, NIE chief executive, said: "A judicial review must be the next stage if the MMC's proposals are not adopted. This throws the whole regulatory process into disrepute."

If Mr McIlmoor carries out his threat

Tempus, page 30

Watchdogs in power struggle

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE electricity watchdog in Northern Ireland may seek a judicial review after the Monopolies and Mergers Commission appeared to rule in favour of Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) in a dispute over pricing.

The showdown looked inevitable after the regulator said he might ignore proposals from the MMC to moderate pricing controls on the company.

The warning from Douglas McIlmoor throws into question the whole regulatory process for pricing controls. Until

of ignoring part of the MMC's recommendations, NIE is likely to seek a judicial review. He must then prove his decision to be in the public interest.

Mr McIlmoor had wanted NIE, which has the highest charges for electricity in the UK, to cut transmission and distribution prices 31 per cent next year and thereafter by 2 per cent per year. NIE had wanted a 22 per cent one-off cut, while the MMC recommended 25 per cent. The highest cut would mean a £47 annual cut in bills. NIE already made price cuts based on its own estimates.

The Chinese flag will soon replace the Union Jack in Hong Kong. But what will happen to the economic complexion of the colony? How will companies fare after the changeover? Will investors be seeing red? Martin Currie thinks not.

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Stuart Siddall, left, financial director, with Paul Harrison, who is leaving Alpha in the summer to take up a senior job at Standard Chartered Bank

ALPHA
AIRPORTS GROUP LTD

Capital and Regional to pay £147m for five shopping centres

BY FRASER NELSON

CAPITAL AND Regional Properties is to become the second largest retail property group in the UK after agreeing to buy five shopping centres from Grosvenor Asset Management for £147 million.

The properties, bought by Grosvenor for £15 million less than a year ago, will lift its gross property assets by 60 per cent, to £395 million. Its most expensive buy is the Howgate Centre in Falkirk, sold for £43.4 million. It has also bought the Alhambra Centre in Barnsley, Liberty II in

Romford, Selbourne Walk in Walthamstow, and the Sauchiehall Centre, Glasgow. Grosvenor has made a healthy profit on each of the sales. It paid £4.5 million for Howgate and the Alhambra Centre in Barnsley in February last year, and Capital and Regional has agreed to pay £60.5 million. It made £7 million for Selbourne Walk, bought last July, and made a £2.6 million profit on the Liberty II, which it bought only five months ago for £18.8 million.

Martin Barber, chairman of Capital and Regional, said that he was not aware of how much Grosvenor had originally paid for the properties, but they had nonetheless been secured for £2 million less than the valuation estimates. He went on: "We don't really mind what other people make out of it; what we want to know is whether it's the right price for us. We don't know what costs they had to incur to attract tenants. This gives us a much stronger hand with retailers; if they want to

open a store, we can ask them to do up one of their stores in another centre. It will be a bit of scratch my back."

The four English shopping centres come as a leasehold purchase, with the local councils owning the freehold. Mr Barber said this left the company with the option of buying the freehold and the chance to release more value.

He added: "Pretty much all the local authorities are strapped for cash and I can't see the floodgates opening after the general election.

There is a marriage value gained in buying the freehold, and that is something we will consider."

The five centres have a combined retail space of 922,000 sq ft with £9.6 million of rental income and an average yield of 8.22 per cent.

Capital and Regional is funding the deal through £94 million of borrowings, with a placing and open offer to raise £60 million by placing new shares at 215p a share.

The company's shares closed 2p easier, at 233½p.

Alpha announced a 6.8 per cent rise in underlying pre-tax profits for the year to January 31 to £220 million from £20.6 million. But the headline figure was cut back to £7.8 million by a £14.2 million exceptional loss on the sale of US Kitchens, its American exchange firm.

The total dividend rises to 5.25p (5p) a share, with a 3.5p final, payable from adjusted earnings of 10.16p (10.75p).

Mr Galpin said that over the medium term, Alpha would see continuing cuts in management fees from BAA, while it would also hit by abolition of duty-free allowances.

□ BAA, the airports operator,

is taking a charge of £53 million against its profits for its latest financial year because of a change of

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The

A WORKING WEEK FOR: JENNIFER LAING

Cheerleader stimulated by cultural shift

Victoria McKee meets the woman who was brought in to run Saatchi & Saatchi, the agency now cutting the cord with Cordiant

Monday	C
Tuesday	C
Wednesday	C
Thursday	C
Friday	C

SAATCHI & Saatchi is about to regain its identity as an independent advertising agency. Jennifer Laing, chief executive of the firm's North American operations, is optimistic that last week's decision by Cordiant to split off its component agencies will provide a shot of adrenalin. "I'd like to see that passion and competitiveness come bubbling up a bit more," said the woman who dubs herself "a good cheerleader".

She was on a trip to France last weekend when she heard confirmation of the latest restructuring of the business she first joined straight from college in 1969. She oozes enthusiasm for the change. "Saatchi & Saatchi is one of the most famous brand names in the world and had become blurred by the Cordiant branding," she says. "Now we're free to develop it."

Laing's deep-rooted affection for the firm was what made her the choice to move in as chairman in April 1995 after the departure of the brothers who had bestowed their name on it. In January this year, she moved to New York, when Alan Bishop, who had been running the US show, took over in London. The culture shock was still showing when I met her in her elegant office in an office in New York.

Her move, initiated by Ed Wax, the 60-year-old chief executive officer of Saatchi & Saatchi Worldwide, was made in such a rush that Laing and her long-time personal partner and professional deputy Tony Dalton found themselves in New York without even the security of a rented apartment. So they had to submit to the rigours of interrogation by a New York co-operative board. "They made us provide three years' tax returns and commit to having no dogs and no children and not smoking," she says incredulously. "We also had to be interviewed. It was an extraordinary process, but quite good fun." That and numerous personal references eventually secured their one-year lease in one of Donald Trump's tower blocks, now furnished in a style Laing dubs "basically bland" by a furniture rental firm.

From the far-from-bland Victoriana of her London home she brought just a silver teapot and a few other knick-knacks to personalise the place.

She has left behind the red Ferrari which helped to woo her back to Saatchi & Saatchi after having left the firm and a top job as joint chairman, in the mid-1980s. She had gone on to run her own agency, and turing her back to Charlotte Street took more than the flashy car — her firm had to be bought too. Ironically, Charles Saatchi had predicted her business would eventually be bought out by Saatchis, though even he probably could not have envisaged the circumstances.

We meet in Laing's office in New York's office at least one day a week, and often two, and Tony and I are often just passing each other at airports.

She may have to go to clients, but has a knack for bringing clients to the agency and keeping them there. It's a source of pride for her that "we didn't lose a single client at Saatchi's London after we went there, after the original exodus". That included big accounts such as British Airways and the Conservative Party, which stayed with Maurice and Charles and their new M & C Saatchi agency.

"Not only that, we galvanised the culture towards the clients and looked after them better than ever before and produced the second most profitable year ever in Charlotte Street. We also won more awards than the agency had ever won in its life. We are 'agency of the year' this year," she says proudly, "and the agency had never won that accolade, even when all those so-called charismatic and famous ad people were there!"

By that, of course, she means Charles and Maurice, whose departure may have shocked Charlotte Street, but caused few ripples in the US. "In London we had a crisis — but the crisis brought to the fore the Saatchi culture, that passion for advertising and that competitiveness that has always been so good for us. But here



Jennifer Laing has slipped effortlessly into a New York lifestyle since her arrival in January but says she is still getting her mind into American culture

there was no crisis. Charles and Maurice had nothing to do with the day-to-day business in America. They were with the holding company now named Cordiant. American business people had not put them on a pedestal. They just saw a debt-ridden holding company and held the people in charge responsible." It was a US fund manager, David Herro, who led the demands for change.

In some ways, she regrets not having an excuse to shake up the New York office. "Although I don't want a crisis here, I need to find positive ways to do that." She has already commissioned a major piece of staff research to understand what the culture is here and what aspects of Saatchiness I can develop here".

Certainly the staff seem keen, hitting the jogging track at dawn and the clients' products (like General Mills cereals) in the subsidised cafeteria afterwards. In the special "Kid Connection" they're communicating intensely on the Internet with Saatchi's 300 "virtual" child consultants — when they're not crawling around the floor testing toys. "Although we're a very successful agency, the third-biggest in New York — behind Grey and Y&R [Young and Rubicam] — and we bill £1.5 billion, we're not automatically known

here. Not many people could tell you the brands we advertise because the agency's quite modest and doesn't bang its own drum the way, of course, Saatchi in London does." Not waiting for the results of

the survey to start her

cheerleading, Laing gathered together 300 of her 500 staff (100 more than at Charlotte Street), "including people from the accounts department and the doormen", and asked how many were

familiar with the advertising that the company did. "A lot weren't," she says incredulously. "And my feeling is that you might as well work in a bank" — what

scorn she puts into that word — "if you don't know what we're doing, if you work in an advertising agency, you should feel some involvement with the product."

So she showed them a video of Saatchi ads "and I said to them 'go home and talk to somebody about our work today' and on Monday I was in the — what do they call it, the rest room — when a lovely young lady came up to me and said 'I was talking to some friends at the weekend about the Tylenol spot and they said they'd seen it during the Superbowl coverage but didn't know who'd done it.' Triumphant,

Laing replays the video, with ads for everything from the headache reliever Tylenol (a nostalgic father-and-son football sequence) to Bell Atlantic classifieds (a little black boy mischievously trying to

sell all his older brother's effects) and the pro bono ad for an action group against guns, featuring horrific scenes of children killed by them against a background of Peter, Paul and Mary singing *Where have all the children gone?* A brain surgeon warns that "drugs really mess up your mind" and popular *Sister, Sister* sitcom stars munch Frosted Cheerios.

Laing admits she's still getting her mind into American culture and can't always trust her gut reactions as she could in Britain, but maintains that a really good ad can cross cultural barriers, which is partly why she's now in New York. "The move is towards globalisation," she says. "It's the way the Saatchi world is going and it's the way the world is going. That's what this job swap is about."

I'd like to see passion and competitiveness come bubbling up a bit more

fall
pay
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ff purchase

HIDDEN ASSETS

Curious visitors flock to Wren church rich with history, says Joanna Pitman

Insurance company revels in haunting beauty of its offices

Architectural historians, students, members of ecclesiastical bodies, Americans searching for their ancestral roots and groups of tourists turn up regularly at the City offices of Christchurch Insurance wondering if they can have a look around. Such a flow of strictly non-business visitors is inevitable if your offices are located inside a beautiful 1667 Wren church and its neighbouring vestry, just from St Paul's Cathedral.

In 1992, the year Christchurch Insurance was formed, the company took up a 125-year lease on the tower of Christ Church Newgate Street from the City Corporation. At the same time it also took a lease on the adjoining vestry from United Friendly, which had bought it in 1981 from an Irish property developer.

A firm of ecclesiastical

architects, Seely & Paget, which specialised in the restoration of City churches bombed during the war, had restored the exterior and modernised the interior of the vestry and done further restoration work on the tower.

When Christchurch moved in, a spiral staircase was installed in the tower, cabling and computer equipment introduced and now Wren's tower echoes to the sounds of risk-management negotiations — sadly the original bells have disappeared.

In one of the offices, late 17th century and early 18th century memorial tablets look down from the walls. Another, in the upper part of the bell tower, looks out on four sides to a panoramic City

view, one of them being St Paul's at close quarters.

The history of Christ Church, Newgate, begins with the Franciscans known as Grey Friars, who came to London from Italy in 1224 and occupied land in Newgate. Little is known of the first church erected there, but in 1306 the Grey Friars began work on a magnificent new edifice, probably the largest friars' church in England.

Over the years, the site has been subject to more than its fair share of disasters. During the great European earthquake, which shook London on April 6, 1580, "the roof of Christ Church was so shaken that a stone dropped out of it, killing one person and mortally wounding

another, it being sermon time".

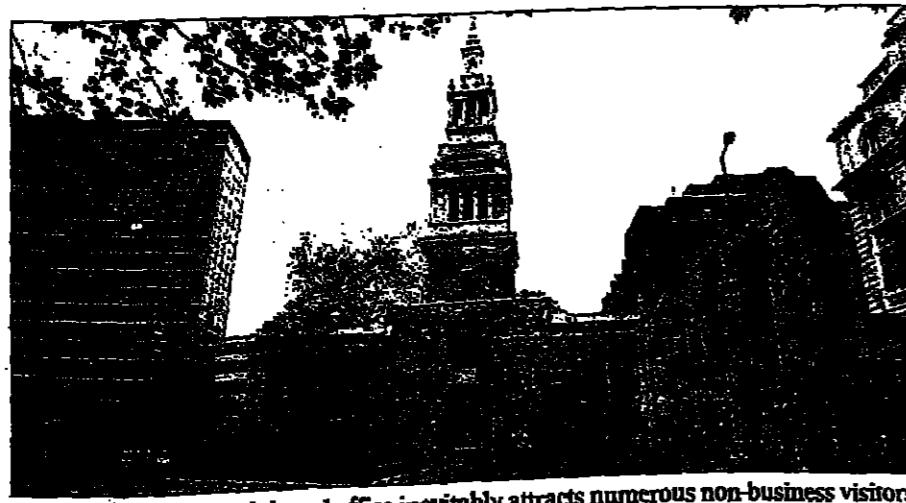
In 1666, the church was almost entirely destroyed in the Great Fire. Its remains were left untouched until 1687, when rebuilding was begun to designs by Wren. The steeple was completed in 1704.

The church suffered major damage during the Second World War, when a firebomb struck in 1940. All that remained, apart from two outside walls, was the damaged tower. In 1960 the spire and the upper part of the tower above the circular windows were rebuilt.

The churchyard has survived and is now a quiet oasis in the middle of the bustling city. Isabella, Edward II's queen, is buried here and she is thought to haunt the churchyard. Lady Alice Hungerford is also said to haunt the churchyard. She was acclaimed as the great beauty of her generation but poisoned her second husband and was hanged in 1525.

However, no ghosts have yet seriously disrupted business for Christchurch Insurance, although Derek Bell, chief executive, does enjoy telling visitors about the campaign waged against the T and the M sections in the office's filing system. Administrative staff regularly find the two files muddled, sometimes with sections missing. Bell wonders whether the culprit could be one Thomas Misener, who died in 1779 and whose tablet sits on the wall above the filing cabinets.

Mysterious indeed.



Such a beautiful church-based office inevitably attracts numerous non-business visitors

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T1 202

STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

Utilities shrug off fears over windfall taxation

JUST six days to polling day and shares of the big utilities were shrugging off any remaining fears about windfall tax and increased regulatory pressures to score some useful gains in a failing market.

Merrill Lynch, the broker, has taken the initiative by publishing a major review of the gas, electric and water utilities. Far from expressing fears about the consequences of a Labour Government, Merrill's Andrew Wright is confident about the future. Faced with takeover activities and balance sheet restructuring, investors have been inclined to overlook their yield attractions.

"The market is now over discounting the political and regulatory risks for the utilities. There is still plenty to go for," he insists.

He uses United Utilities, born out of the merger of North West Water and Norweb, as a case in point. The shares rose 13p to 671½p yesterday where they yield 7 per cent and can muster dividend growth of 11 per cent per annum.

He recommends a total of nine companies, four water and five electricity. They include Hyder, up 3½p at 822½p, South West Water, 2½p easier at 670p, Wessex, 5p up at 384p. The electricity companies are Southern Electric, down 6p at 414p, Scottish Power, 1p lighter at 374p, National Power, 2p better at 525½p, National Grid, 6p higher at 221½p, and Scottish Hydro, 1p off at 372½p. Northern Ireland Electricity rose 9½p to 389½p unaided by the regulator's demand to cut prices by 25 per cent.

The stronger than expected rise in the first-quarter gross domestic product brought with it fresh fears of a rise in interest rates straight after the election. This combined with an opening fall for the Dow Jones industrial average saw share prices lose ground. But the FTSE 100 index managed to close off the bottom ending 18.8 down at 4,369.7, reducing the rise on the week to 59.2. A total of 900 million shares changed hands.

The Allianz & Leicester provided a tired-looking market with a new lease of life when it began trading on Monday. Institutions pitched their bids in the initial auction way above even the most optimistic forecast. The shares started trading at 52½p closing



Lord Tugendhat, Abbey chairman, saw the shares fall 9p

unchanged at the end of the week on 554p, a premium 32p. It has also provided the new bank's shareholders with a windfall worth £1.385.

Nick Lord, banking analyst at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, says the success of A&L's float owes much to the fact that it is being spoken of as a takeover target two to three years down the line.

J Sainsbury slipped 2p to 323p after a visit to the supermarkets group this week by Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, which came away unimpressed. CLL told clients that the group still has a lot of ground to make up and is cautious about prospects for its Giant Food stake in the US. CLL rates the shares no better than a "hold".

He maintains that the rest of the banking sector will remain underpriced as fund managers continue to increase their weightings in the sector during the months ahead. Those likely to feature include Barclays, down 19p at £10.88s after a strong run, NatWest Bank, 1p off at 710p HSBC, 18½p down at £15.63s, and Lloyds TSB, 5p dearer at 557p.

But Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, has turned cautious of Abbey National, 9p

cheaper at 816½p, after Thursday's uninspiring trading update. Word is Laing may be on the verge of downgrading its profit numbers.

ICI, 2p firmer at 702½p, has become the latest company to complain about the damage a strong pound does to profitability. It joins a growing list of companies which are finding it increasingly difficult to

make a significant acquisition. Siebe says it never comments on market speculation.

It's also been a difficult week for the retailers, particularly the big-ticket variety. Despite an impressive set of profit numbers earlier in the week from DFS Furniture, unchanged at 552½p, several brokers have reported a downturn in big-ticket sales during the past month as uncertainty over the election and a slowdown in the housing market take their toll.

Carpetright has been the hardest hit with the price sliding a further 3p to 469½p yesterday. The various building society windfalls may provide some benefit, but according to ABN Amro Hoare Govett, it could be the final quarter of the year before there is any sustained pick-up in sales.

Laura Ashley continued to lick its wounds after Thursday's profits warning. But some brokers say the shares are worth a punt at these levels and the price firmed 2p to 106p as 2.5 million shares were traded.

■ **GILT-EDGED:** There was a further steepening of the yield curve as government securities again underperformed overseas bond markets during a lacklustre session.

In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt finished £132 lower at £101.80s.

In longs, Treasury 8 per cent fell 4½p to £101.25s, while in shorts Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was 1½p off at £102.4.

■ **NEW YORK:** Wall Street shares were lower as the Dow Jones industrials continued to erase recent gains. The industrial average was off 60.20 to 6,732.05 at midday.

MAJOR INDICES

	New York (midday)
Dow Jones	6732.05 +0.03
S&P Composite	764.37 (-1.81)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	1861.78 (-45.21)
Hong Kong:	
Hung Seng	1245.76 (+81.07)
Amsterdam:	
Eurox Index	752.62 (-10.54)
Sydney:	
ASX	Closed
Frankfurt:	
DAX	3374.10 (-23.26)
Singapore:	
Straits	2019.60 (-0.57)
Brussels:	
General	1226.33 (-103.99)
Paris:	
CAC-40	2536.35 (-3.57)
Zurich:	
SIXX Gen	991.00 (-10.80)
London:	
FTE 100	2892.0 (-7.71)
FTE 1000	4369.7 (-18.80)
FTE 250	4500.5 (-16.91)
FTE 350	2143.0 (-4.93)
FTE Eurostar 100	2196.79 (-10.15)
FTE All-Shares	2116.15 (-8.32)
FTE Non Financials	3159.56 (-1.41)
FTE Small Interest	101.30 (-0.10)
FTE Cons Socs	93.40 (+0.33)
FTSE Volume	901.50s
US:	
American	1,628.0 (+0.035)
German Mark	2,7977 (+0.050)
Swiss Francs	1,007.70 (+0.101)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
ECU	1,4238
ESDR	1,1844
RPI	155.4 Mar (1.0%) Jan 1987-100
RPIX	154.9 Mar (2.7%) Jan 1987-100

Source: Euronext

TEMPUS

Mid-air rendezvous

THE primary goal of Airbus must be to catch up with Boeing. The McDonnell Douglas merger last December shattered the illusion that Airbus could catch up quickly with the aircraft builders from Seattle. Boeing is currently set to dominate the world aerospace sector for decades to come.

But an Airbus merger with Lockheed would be a dramatic move that could create a fighting force equal to Boeing-McDonnell Douglas. So far, Airbus and Boeing have only been competing in civil aviation. Although the European consortium made huge strides over the first half of this decade, it still couldn't match the Americans' market share. Let alone their productivity rates. But now both businesses are putting more emphasis on the military side by linking up with Lockheed and McDonnell, the world's number one and two

defence groups respectively. As Lockheed is the bigger of the two, the balance will be redressed towards Airbus. British Aerospace shareholders have already enjoyed a strong share price rise, helped in part by the Airbus decision to convert from a consortium into an ordinary company and float on the stock market.

But the news gets better. Assuming that transatlantic co-operation will lead to a further relaxation of workshare arrangements, British Aerospace will gain a greater share of Airbus contracts. BAE investors should also remember that their company is already co-operating with Lockheed on a number of defence projects. The merger talks are good news for BAE shareholders, although the benefits may only be seen in the long term. Stay on board.

record established on its four other centres, a re-rating would seem sure to follow.

In Aberdeen, it has almost trebled the visitors in three years through stunts like hiring Marilyn Monroe lookalikes to lure in the shoppers — not the kind of高yielding properties without having set any of its clever tricks into action. The shares should benefit from a re-rating.

the same magic and lifted rentals by 13 per cent simply through good marketing ideas. The same magic has been sprinkled on its other centres, and now it is sitting with five well-positioned high yielding properties without having set any of its clever tricks into action. In Wood Green, it worked

Cap & Reg

AT FIRST SIGHT, it would appear that Capital & Regional properties has been well and truly ripped off in its enthusiasm to shift away from office properties to the bright lights of shopping centres.

It has handed Grosvenor Asset Management an £82 million profit on centres bought less than a year ago, and seems to care very little about the money lost.

But its glee is well founded. Office-weighted property stocks have taken a beating of late, and the sector is still a hotbed of outdated valuations and over-renting.

Now C&R has catapulted itself into a major player in shopping centres, and is braced to enjoy the full flow of consumer spending upturn.

If it lives up to the track

record established on its four other centres, a re-rating would seem sure to follow.

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RECENT ISSUES

Alliance & Leicester	554	-1
Aurora Inv Trust	100	...
Bickerton	38	...
Charlton Athletic	57	...
Close Bros Port VCT	95	...
Comino	139	...
Donatazontario	80	+ 6
Heals	212	...
Lady in Leisure	127	+ 2
Methven's	48	...
NMT (50)	50	...
Newcastle Utd	125	+ 1
Northstar Secs	28	...
Oxford Tech Venture	95	...
Qualicram (143)	155	...
Soccer Investments	102	...
Torch Hidge	107	...
United Overseas Grp	65	+ 3

Source: Euronext

RIGHTS ISSUES

Ask Central n/p (160)	35	...
Break for the Brdr n/p 1%	...	
Edge Props n/p (135)	18	...
Luminar n/p (320)	57	+ 5
Pemberton n/p (18) 3	...	

Source: Euronext

MAJOR CHANGES

Rises:	
Argentia Inns	2060 (+11p)
Waste Mgt Int'l	250p (+11p)
Old Eng Pub	254p (+11p)
Tilbury Dougl	715p (+30p)
PizzaExpress	689p (+21p)
Danika Bi Sys	462p p (+10p)
Compass Corp	581p (+10p)
Telspec	262.3 (-12.3)
Blacks Leis	475p (-8p)

Source: Euronext

FALLS:

Sterling	315p (-22.5)
Hoseys	291p (-14p)
Conie	391p (-11p)
BAA	518p (-14p)
Sebe	912p (-22.5)
McKinnie	496p (-10p)
Scot & New	672p (-12.5)
Logica	940p (-15p)
Nat West	710p (-1p)
Crada	235p (-11p)
Tim Holt	303.5p (-17.5p)
Laporte	667p (-17.5p)
Laird	388p (-17.5p)

Source: Euronext

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso	1,624.61-1,627.1
Belgian Franc	1,400.00-1,400.00



UNFAIR SHARES 36

Why payout
divides
two sisters

THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR



Millions of people with standard variable rate mortgages from different lenders are paying very different amounts for their loans, according to *Moneyfacts*, the monthly savings magazine.

Over the 25-year period of the loan, those with the most expensive mortgages could end up paying up to £10,000 more than those with the cheaper loans.

The reason is that lenders now charge different variable rates of interest. At one time, all lenders had the same

Highs and lows on the mortgage front

standard variable rate. Now many of the mutual societies offer lower rates of interest on loans as part of their mutual benefit packages.

According to *Moneyfacts*, the cheapest variable rate loan is from the Yorkshire Building Society. The total amount paid annually in interest on a £50,000 mortgage is £3,436.

One of the most expensive

mortgages is a Bank of Ireland variable rate loan, where the total annual amount paid on a £50,000 loan is £3,769.

Other cheaper loans include those offered by the Nationwide, where the annual repayments are £3,445, and the Bradford & Bingley, where the sum would be £3,553. Yorkshire charges interest of 6.94 per cent on its

CAROLINE MERRELL

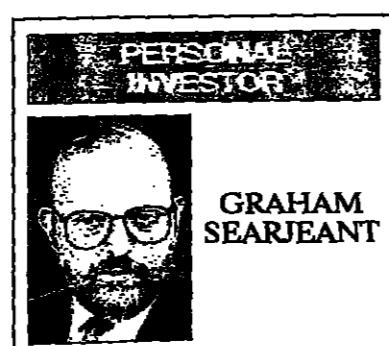
The many, not the few

Throughout the election campaign, the Labour Party has tried to push one theme: it would govern for the many, not the few. This slogan ranges from tax and education to sport. If it means anything, it should also favour investors. By this time next week, unless voters or Tony Blair change their minds, new Labour's Gordon Brown will sit behind a desk in Number 11 Downing Street, not-so-new Labour's Margaret Beckett will be setting up the presidential quarters at the Department of Trade and Industry, and investors will be waiting to find out if it does.

The numbers, though not always accurate, are clear enough. Most people in work are members of a pension plan. Pension savers are the many not the few. Families that draw private pensions are increasingly also the many, not the few, long before Labour's proposed stakeholder sees the light of day. So please, Mr Brown, if you are Chancellor, do not punish the many by cutting long-term pension returns to raise short-term cash.

About three million people are thought to own trust units for simplicity and to spread risk. That is roughly three times the numbers in higher education. So please, Mr Brown, if you want to distinguish between short-term and long-term capital gains, do not make investment in unit and investment trusts more complex for the many. After pensions, personal equity plans have become the key vehicle for modest long-term savings. So please do not cut the tax breaks that pay for the charges or impose needless new restrictions.

For Labour, however, the biggest



GRAHAM SEAREJANT

cultural shock is to realise that private shareholders are also the many, not the few. About 11 million people own shares individually. Conversion of more building societies and the Norwich Union should swell this figure to at least 15 million, even if most of those who hang on own other shares of some kind.

The shareholder interest will be more than double the 6.8 million members of trade unions, three times the 4.2 million who work in manufacturing, energy and water put together.

Wider share ownership is here. Unless new Labour treats it as an aberration, it will not go away. For better or worse, most of the millions who bought privatised shares have stayed. In millions of cases, they have stayed for more than a decade, promoting the identity of interest once sought between ordinary people and great businesses. Many of those who will own shares in the Halifax will keep them for a decade too.

Sadly, the Tories did not stick to the

John Redwood's idea. Once the Portillo tendency reached the Cabinet, it ignored two million small shareholders of British Gas, sequestered much of their business and rewrote the rules against what was left. Labour had an impeccable precedent for its utilities levy. Yet no tax could be more accurately targeted to hit small investors of modest means. Worthy as the cause may be, the utility levy will hit the many to help the few. Investors must hope that this levy, though a brainchild of Mr Brown, is a relic of 1992, not a portent of what else Labour has in mind. It may be inconvenient that most shareholders mainly hold shares in utilities, but the inconvenience is not unique. How whizzo it would be if small investors all backed new smaller companies. In reality, most hold stock in the largest, best-established and therefore less than spotless corporations: oil majors, out-of-town shopping groups, drink and tobacco companies. Please remember, Mrs Beckett, these are the backbone of pension funds, unit trusts and small investors' portfolios, not the few holding the many to ransom.

Just as important, please promote the interests of small investors, who fall foul of security industry economics and lose their voice and most of their rights in the process. Being the many, small investors need megaphones rather than muzzles so that they can pursue the interests of the many — perennially loyal, sometimes ethical, often long-term and very often green — in the great private sector organisations Labour no longer seeks to own itself.

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WEEKEND MONEY

PENSION PLIGHT 35

Why a service widow cannot get a loan



Pension power gathers steam

Sara McConnell finds out what the latest tussle between firms and scheme members will mean

A struggle is fast developing over a fortune that may amount to as much as £60 billion. This is the estimate of the surpluses generated by UK pension funds whose total assets are £65 billion. But to whom does this money belong? Workers or bosses?

Dennis Cockerill, chairman of the recently formed Committee of Unilever Pensioners (Coup) action group, said the committee had been "snowed under" with letters of support from retired employees at other companies, since revelations that it was planning to challenge Unilever's plans for the use of its £800 million surplus.

Employers are already facing a number of high-profile challenges to their plans for using surpluses which have built up in the fund. Booming stock markets in the 1980s swelled pension fund coffers, and surpluses built up during the recession started to bite in the 1990s and companies took on fewer staff, according to the National Association of Pension Funds. But the ownership of surpluses has become a bone of contention between employers and pensioners. Pensioners and employees argue that any surpluses should belong to them because the fund is set up for their benefit. But employers point out that they contribute on employees' behalf and guarantee pension payments.

Next month, the National Grid will appeal against a ruling by the Pensions Ombudsman that it must repay £46 million of a £70 million surplus which it had "misused" to pay for early redundancies. If the ombudsman's decision is upheld, other privatised utility

ties could be forced to repay a total of more than £1 billion in their pension funds. In a separate case, the Government was told by the ombudsman to repay £163 million to the National Bus pension fund which it took when the company was privatised in 1990.

Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch company, is braced for determined lobbying by pensioners at its annual meeting in two weeks. Pensioners are angry that their share of the £500 million surplus will total only £70 million. Mr Cockerill, of Coup, said: "We would like to see the enormous surplus shared more fairly with more money for pensioners, deferred pensioners and dependants." Unilever proposes to keep £500 million as a "cushion" in case of a future downturn in the fortunes of the pension fund. A further £220 million will be used to give the company and its current employees a "contributions holiday". Pensioners will get a "special increase" of £70 million, concentrated on the oldest pensioners and those on pensions of less than £5,000 a year. Out of the company's 43,000 pensioners, 38,000 will benefit from extra money.

But protesters are calling on the company to use part of the surplus to update their pension

payments over the past four years by the maximum 3 per cent allowed by the Inland Revenue. So who actually owns the surplus and how can scheme members be sure they are being fairly treated? Here are some answers.

Q How do I find out if there is a surplus?

A You should be able to find out from the scheme accounts or actuarial reports, which you have a right to request under the new Pensions Act implemented last month. It will only be an issue if your scheme is based on your final salary because only in such schemes does your employer guarantee to pay you a certain level of pension. Any money left over after it has satisfied these guarantees will be surplus.

Q Who owns the surplus? Surely it belongs to the employees and pensioners who have contributed?

A Not necessarily. The company could equally well argue that it has a right to at least some of the money because it has probably contributed to it on your behalf. It also has a duty to put more money into the fund if there is the threat of a shortfall, so

WEEKEND MONEY
is edited by Anne Ashworth

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Marianne Curphey with a buyer's guide to rental properties

From location to letting



This life's cast typify young professionals who need large rented properties

With the most recent survey suggesting that parts of the country have seen a 5 per cent increase in house prices in the past three months, and uncertainty over how equities will perform after the election, an increasing number of people are looking to invest in bricks and mortar. The Institute of Chartered Surveyors reported last week that house price rises in London, the South East and West Midlands were driving a mini-boom.

Although the combination of low interest rates and high rental income may seem tempting for would-be landlords, there are income tax, capital gains tax and insurance implications to such a purchase.

Property is a long-term investment - it is illiquid and you may not be able to sell up quickly if you need your capital back in a hurry. On the other hand, it has historically protected owners against some of the ravages of inflation on their savings.

The first step towards being a landlord is to decide whether you are investing for rental income or capital growth.

Yolande Barnes, director of research at Savills, the estate agency, says those looking for maximum capital appreciation need to pick an area where there is strong growth in the local economy and wealth-creating industries.

She suggests Leeds, Bristol and Manchester, plus central London, but says the very top properties in these regions have already moved up in price considerably.

"However, there is still scope for the next rung down on the housing ladder," she says. "Demand for good quality detached houses and cottages is already growing. If you can be objective and buy in any area of the country, then pick regions like Glasgow, the North West, Bir-

mingham and Manchester, where there is considerable local wealth.

In London, look at houses around the £100,000 mark, within the M25 ring or near places like Guildford and Sevenoaks, where good quality family homes with three or four bedrooms and a garden are in demand."

Says that some properties will cover the cost of the mortgage, but will not command huge rents. However, the income will be realised when the property is sold several years later. One land-

lord who bought a house as part of my job and was concerned that I might miss out on house price rises. I chose Surrey because I thought it would be easy to find tenants - and it was. Within two days of redecorating the house it was let."

He paid down £20,000 deposit and now pays a mortgage rate 2 per cent above the standard variable rate charged by HomeLoans Direct of Solihull, which last month became a financial services provider and changed its name to Paragon Mortgages. The mortgage interest payments, including an endowment policy, are £320 a month, and he charges rent of £600.

He said: "After lettings expenses, insurance and repairs to the house I will not make much profit from the rent. However, I hope to gain from the increase in house prices. I calculate prices have risen by around 6 per cent since 1

bought in February." If you are looking purely for rental income, the criteria are very different. Ms Barnes says it is possible to buy cheap properties in areas where there is a high demand for rented property and which will yield the best rents.

She suggests choosing property in university towns, near other academic institutions or near a hospital.

The Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA) favours newly built properties for rental investment because of the low maintenance and running costs.

A buy-to-let scheme was launched last year by Arla, backed by the Halifax Building Society, Mortgage Express, Lloyds TSB and HomeLoans Direct.

Before embarking on letting property, it is wise to note the following points:

■ Letting can go wrong and tenants who default can take everything - including the central heating system - when they disappear. Eviction can be lengthy and costly.

■ Arrange for an assured short-hold tenancy.

■ To get a mortgage for a second property to let you will need a deposit of at least 25 per cent and the interest charged will be 0.5 per cent to 3 per cent above the lenders' standard variable rate.

■ Make sure utility bills are charged to clients.

■ Costs will include solicitors' fees to arrange the tenancy, advertising for tenants and the managing agent's fee - typically 10 to 15 per cent of the rent.

■ Landlords who let out the whole property are not entitled to mortgage interest tax relief at source (Miras), although a number of costs, such as mortgage interest and agency fees, and the costs of being a landlord including stationery, telephone calls and redecorating, can be offset against tax.

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* Gross rates of interest do not take account of deduction of Income Tax. If you are eligible to receive your interest without deduction of Income Tax you should register on Inland Revenue Form IR35 which is available in all the Society's branches. Interest is credited or paid net at periods of 12 months in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the account. Shareholders in the Balanced Guaranteed Equity Bond do not have access to the dividends generated by the FT-SE 100 companies. Withdrawals of capital from the five year bond are not permitted. Bristol & West Building Society is a member of the Building Societies Association and of the Building Societies' Ombudsman Scheme, and subscribes to the Code of Banking Practice. Bristol & West Building Society, PO Box 27, Broad Quay, Bristol, BS99 7AX.

Tax trap for the US-born

Thousands of British residents born in America may unwittingly be building large debts in back taxes to the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Dyke Davies, an American lawyer and partner in the London office of Brown and Wood, said: "The US imposes worldwide taxation on anyone who is a citizen or who holds a green card, regardless of where they live and where their money is earned."

In practice, most people who fall down on this obligation are green card holders who go abroad for a few years and are not informed at their local tax-return preparation shop that they should also be filing returns for the IRS. Then there are those US citizens who have never lived in America, but who were

born there when their parents were on an extended holiday.

Traditionally, the IRS has been merciful to unwitting offenders and, once they have come forward, asked them to file returns only for the three previous years. But the impression of tax specialists in London is that the IRS will no longer accept ignorance of the law as an excuse not to file.

Tom Buchanan, 29, was born in Richmond, Virginia, and his British parents obtained a US passport for him when they were returning to England. At 19 he renewed his US passport without being told of any tax liabilities. Only when he was transferred recently to the New York office of his London-based public relations company, did his accountant discover that he should have been submitting

returns to the IRS since he started work. But because he earned less than \$70,000 a year, Buchanan was eligible to apply for an exclusion. The exercise still cost him £3,000 in fees.

It is not clear how closely the computer systems of the IRS and the US immigration authorities are linked. But the notion of British residents being grilled at US passport control over non-filing of tax returns is not too far-fetched.

Stan Beesley, IRS representative in London, emphasised that most offenders earning less than \$70,000 per year would not be taxed twice. But legally they have to file to be eligible to claim exclusion.

■ IRS, 24 Grosvenor Square, London; 0171-408-8076/77.

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Rudge Vale C to unl port o

Performance left wanting at M&G

At the height of the Morgan Grenfell scandal, M&G feared that it would suffer by association, the two groups' initials being identical. Some anxiety was expressed that, for the uninitiated, only an amperstand separated the upstanding, utterly British Municipal and General from the louche goings on at German-owned Morgan Grenfell.

As Morgan Grenfell begins to compensate its wronged investors (see page 40) it is now clear that M&G has its own problems. Nothing to do with fraud, but with a misguided attachment to an investment strategy.

In the selection of shares for its funds, M&G has pursued "value" (see page 34). However, this policy has reduced the net worth of many of its clients. So poor has been the performance of many M&G trusts that some firms of independent financial advisers are now boycotting the group. Shamed at last into action,



ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

M&G is now reshaping its trusts and will dispose of disappointing holdings.

But this long overdue reaction leaves several questions unanswered. Why did M&G launch a new fund in March, instead of concentrating on improving its existing funds? Why did M&G continue to pursue the value strategy when this was clearly not in the interests of customers? How will it ensure that it achieves the best possible price for the large stakes it now means to sell? Will M&G once

more hire Lord Lawson of Blaby, the former Chancellor, to front the advertising campaign giving the answers?

Mutual friends

DETERMINEDLY mutual building societies claim that they will put customers first. The Halifax and the other converting societies make exactly the same promise. Potential borrowers, unconvinced by the claims of either side, will be interested in the 1996 mortgage cost survey

(see page 29). The annual £50,000 loan repayment was the lowest at Yorkshire, Nationwide and Bradford & Bingley, all mutuality fans. But Cheltenham & Gloucester, a division of Lloyds, was also highly competitive. Meanwhile, West Bromwich and Birmingham Midshires, two more mutuality enthusiasts, were among the most expensive. The case for mutuality remains unproven.

Pension tension

FOUR out of ten working adults have no pension provision. Meanwhile, pension companies now offer whose plan has the lowest cost (see page 40). The investment watchdogs should now set out clear guidelines on comparing charges that the novice can understand. Otherwise, pensions will continue to be too complicated for millions, leaving them condemned to poverty in old age.

Conal Gregory on the rising market in political memorabilia

Election winners

As the election reaches its finale, some may be growing heartily sick of the faces of politicians. Others realise that images of those in government or aspiring to office can be tomorrow's antiques. The trade reports a rising market for political memorabilia, with the unusual and original most in demand. Sadly for Tony Blair and John Major, however, it is Baroness Thatcher items that are most popular.

Already a Baroness Thatcher teapot designed by the *Splitting Image* caricaturists Fluck and Law has jumped from £50-£60 two years ago to £200 plus today.

Collectors consider that the first election article was probably a stoneware jug, embossed *TB 1705* with the arms of the City of Norwich. This was probably a reference to Thomas Bladfield, who stood unsuccessfully at the hustings that year. A 1724 Delftware punch bowl, now in the Fitzwilliam museum in Cambridge, has inscribed in its cover: "To the MP for Liverpool, Thomas Booth."

Political plates and mugs from the 18th century are keenly sought. The Worcester ceramics factory, later to become Royal Worcester, commemorated Robert Tracy's

victory in 1747 with a mug. The five-day election was notably corrupt and, although Mr Tracy was bottom in the poll, he was vindicated when he petitioned Parliament. Mugs, printed in black, from the 1760s — depicting Pitt the Elder — sell for £1,700-£2,000.

A pink lustre mug from the 1826 Northumberland election at Alnwick was £150 a decade ago. It shows one or more of the candidates. Today, you can expect to pay £500 according to Andrew Hilton, of Special Auction Services, based in Midgham Park, near Reading who holds regular sales of political memorabilia.

Collector plates depicting Charles James Fox, the Whig politician and noted orator are popular. Ten years ago a good example made £100, which has doubled today. Stoneware spirit flasks can be found depicting the leading parliamentary figures of the 1832 Reform Bill. Charles Grey makes £300, and Daniel O'Connell £400.

Engraved glassware can occasionally be found. Presumably as an electoral bribe, one of the Reading candidates had "Success to Sir Francis Knollys 1761" inscribed on to a goblet with open bowl and conical foot. He was elected but never spoke in Parliament. The glass makes £2,000 plus.

Churchill material is far

more popular. A signed photograph of him made £420 plus buyer's premium a year ago at Christie's South Kensington. Signed political photographs are offered by Polito's, Britain's first bookshop specialising in political memorabilia. It quotes £55 for Helmut Kohl, £59 Kissinger, £95 Gerald Ford and Oliver North, £19 Wilson, and £495 for Reagan.

Thatcher commemorative plates are tipped by Polito's managing director Iain Dale. He offers the Royal Doulton 3½ inch plate of Margaret Thatcher for £35. Other Royal Doulton material includes

toby jugs of Kennedy, Lincoln, Roosevelt and Washington — each at £60.

Memorabilia from this election will also attract high prices in future, he said. "Posters such as the one portraying Tony Blair as Chancellor, Kohl's knee will be very marketable, and anything to do with Martin Bell should be worth keeping. The parties' manifestos will be like gold dust in a few years. The post-election *Times Guide to the House of Commons* is already in demand, and political mugs, beer bottles and badges will all be very collectable."

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Collector plates depicting Charles James Fox, the Whig politician and noted orator are popular. Ten years ago a good example made £100, which has doubled today. Stoneware spirit flasks can be found depicting the leading parliamentary figures of the 1832 Reform Bill. Charles Grey makes £300, and Daniel O'Connell £400.

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Service pension rules add to widow's distress



Pension plight: Jane Burrows with her son, Mark, and a portrait of her late husband, Stephen

Jenny Grove on the rising tide of discontent over unequal treatment of retired Armed Forces personnel

A Weekend Money report on the plight of Armed Forces widows receiving meagre pensions has brought a large response both from the women affected by the rules and from military and naval men. All added their voices to the rising tide of discontent over the treatment of these widows, especially those whose husbands left the services before 1973. There is particular concern that widows have their pensions taken away if they remarry, even though their deceased husband's salaries were reduced to provide pensions for dependants.

Jane Burrows, 32, whose husband was killed by a terrorist bomb seven years ago, said that pension rules not only penalised her for wanting a "normal" family life but could cause hardship. She was refused a loan on the grounds that her war widow's pension was not paid for life.

Her husband, Lance Corporal Stephen Burrows, was killed by a 2,000lb IRA bomb at an Army checkpoint in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, in October 1990. Mrs Burrows was moved immediately to an army camp in England but was warned that within six months she must find her own accommodation.

"I didn't know a soul. The camp was three miles from the city centre so I tried to buy a car but the finance company turned me down on the grounds that my pension was not paid for life. If my father hadn't stood as guarantor I wouldn't have been able to buy it," Mrs Burrows said.

As highlighted recently in Coronation Street, a war widow forfeits her Department of Social Security and Forces Family pensions if she remarries or lives with a man as husband and wife.

Major Desmond Ives, received an artificially depressed pension because his military career ended in 1977 during a period of government pay restraint. "He received less than those of equivalent rank and length of service who retired before him," he pointed out.

When Major Ives died 12 years ago, Mrs Ives's pension — one half of her husband's — was correspondingly reduced. "My husband was in the Army for 39 years. It is a poor reward after a lifetime's service to one's country," she said.

In 1977 about 48,000 people retired from the Forces. Those that were eligible for pensions received less than average because the government "pay freeze" had led to limited increases in military salaries. By contrast that year the pensions of those who had already retired rocketed by 17.7 per cent — in line with the retail price index.

The effect of the so-called pension "trough" year of 1977 is compounded. A major who retired in 1977 after 34 years' service now gets a pension of just under £12,000 a year, compared with £15,900 a year for his equivalent who retired in 1975.

In total, the major who retired in 1977 has now received about £55,480 less than his more fortunate colleague.

Meanwhile, the 54,000-strong Officers' Pensions Society is fighting for reform. Servicemen who retire in a pension trough year — such as 1977 — received exaggeratedly reduced pensions. It is grossly unfair because they have no control over the date at which their careers come to an end. Major-General Peter Bonnet, general secretary of the society, said: "The Government has ignored the long-term implications."

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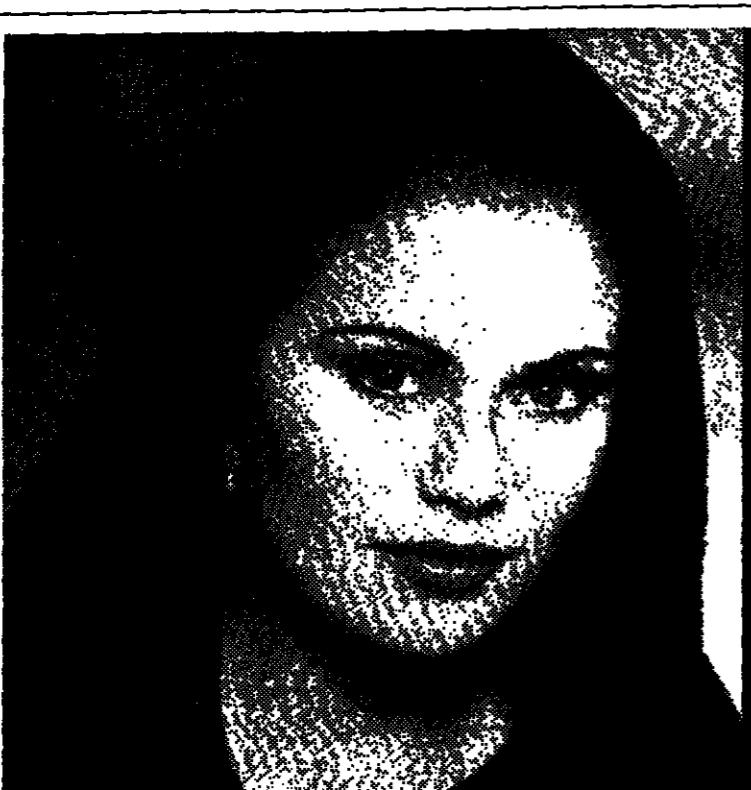
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SCOTTISH WIDOWS

Nathan Yates sees both sides of Pep mortgages



Should she or shouldn't she? Pep mortgages are not always the answer for buyers seeking a loan for a new home

All right for some

Personal equity plan (Pep) mortgages are the latest craze on the mortgage market. A TV advertising campaign by NatWest Bank claims a Pep mortgage is the perfect choice for its heroine. Pep mortgages have also replaced endowments as the flagship product of Halifax Building Society, Britain's biggest lender. For new homebuyers, whether the marketing hyperbole on Pep mortgages is backed by real benefits is an urgent question. The answer is a very qualified "yes".

Advantages

With a traditional repayment mortgage you pay interest plus a proportion of the original sum borrowed each month but with a Pep mortgage you pay only the interest on the loan. The money saved is used to buy Peps, tax-efficient vehicles for buying unit or investment trusts. There are other interest-only mortgages such as endowment or pension schemes but the potentially higher rate of return that can be provided by Peps could make this interest-only product the most effective cost-cutter.

Research by the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds, the unit trusts body, shows that £50 per month invested over the past 25 years in the average Peppable unit trust would now be worth £210,503. This is more than double the gain on the average with-profits endowment, which would now be worth just £96,468. On this record, you are more likely to pay off your mortgage quickly with a Pep mortgage than with an endowment.

The tax treatment of Peps and endowments are also entirely different. Peps are free from capital gains tax and income tax if endowments are held for more than 10 years, they benefit from a tax-free lump

sum. Pep mortgages offer greater flexibility than endowments. You can invest up to £9,000 per year into a Pep, and a Pep mortgage offers freedom within that limit particularly if you choose one that is "unpackaged," or not directly controlled by the lender. If you want to entrust your Pep allowance to different fund managers each year you are free to do so, and you would be well advised to spread your portfolio. This will reduce your exposure to risk if one of your funds performs badly. You are also allowed to contribute more to your Pep mortgage one year and less the next. Payments can also be stopped and restarted.

The flexibility and high returns of Peps mean they are hard to beat as repayment vehicles, said NatWest's Keith Scott. "Pep mortgages are not suitable for everyone, but if you have not used your full Pep allowance it is difficult to see a situation in which you would recommend an endowment over a Pep," he said.

Disadvantages

There are potential pitfalls with a Pep mortgage. One of biggest drawbacks is that, unlike an endowment, you can dip in to your Pep before you have paid off your mortgage. If you suddenly run short of money to pay school fees or other large debts, you may be disciplined enough to leave your Pep plans untouched, which could leave you short of money when it comes to paying off the loan. Another drawback is the need to pay extra life cover which will repay the loan in the event of death.

The mass sale of interest-only endowment mortgages in the 1980s helped to create the negative-equity disaster. More than four in five mortgages sold then were endowments. Those who took out endowments were of-

fered the same prospect of surplus bonuses as Pep mortgage buyers are today. However, some endowments underperformed, and many borrowers had to pay extra premiums to make sure they got an adequate final sum. But the risks that Peps will fail to repay loans are much less because the administrative and commission charges deducted from plans are insignificant compared with the charges on endowments.

Peps were introduced as a tax incentive to investors by Nigel Lawson, the Conservative Chancellor, and future governments may revoke his provision. Because a Pep must be bought under a new contract each year, it is more vulnerable to a change in policy than more permanent endowment deals, though none of the main parties plans to end them.

Pep mortgages also face the claim that they are higher risk than endowments because they involve direct investment in equities which can fall in value, particularly if there is a stock market slump. In addition, if you have a Pep mortgage and lose your job it is likely that you would be disqualified from help with repayments from the Department of Social Security. The DSS only gives assistance to those with less than £8,000 capital, and your Pep would probably exceed this limit.

Conclusion

Pep mortgages offer a mixture of risks and gains. Choosing whether to take one depends on your circumstances, said Patrick Bunting of London and Country Mortgages. "They are best suited to higher earners who are not exposed to the risks," he said.

□ For a free factsheet about Pep mortgages, ring Autif on 0171-831-0898.

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Hurt investors await payment details

Marianne
Curphey
on the end
of a hard few
months for
Morgan
Grenfell



A total of 80,000 investors in Morgan Grenfell who lost money in the wake of the Peter Young affair will discover on Tuesday how much they will receive in compensation.

They are the individual account-holders whom Morgan Grenfell has been able to compensate quickly. However, there are a further 100,000 people whose funds are held in 250 nominee accounts. These include people who have bought trusts via managers such as Skandia, which has 45,000 Morgan Grenfell European investors. Aegon, and Tower Trust of New Zealand. These account-holders will have to wait until Morgan Grenfell has completed negotiations with the managers, which could take several months. The reason for the delay, says Frances Davies, head of pooled funds at Morgan Grenfell Asset Management, is because each investor's compensation is individually assessed, and managers need to provide very detailed data.

"We have our own records which have already been checked and verified, but we need the same from the other managers. If the delay becomes too long, we will just work out compensation based on the records we do hold and the managers can divide the cheque up themselves between their investors."

Peter Young, who was the subject of an official investigation by Imro, the City regulator, had been regarded as the most successful European fund manager in the unit trust

business, with noted long-term performance track record. The focus of the investigation was irregularities on unquoted securities held by the three European funds he managed.

The official investigation and compensation is thought to have cost Morgan Grenfell's parent, Deutsche Bank of Germany, around £430 million.

This includes an immediate payment of £180 million in cash which Deutsche Bank put into the European funds to support them when the Peter Young affair was discovered.

The bill also includes legal fees, the cost of advisers and the extra burden of funding the extra burden of funding the investigation. A team of 100 specialists from Ernst & Young have been assessing the compensation and creating a unique computer model to work out individual compensation packages. A further 100 accountants from Arthur Andersen have been shadowing the exercise and reporting findings to Imro.

Shares in the three funds managed by Peter Young were suspended on September 2, 3 and 4, 1996, and relisted on September 5. In the interim, Deutsche Bank had replaced the unlisted securities with £180 million in cash.

Around 30 per cent of investors left the fund within the next few weeks.

Ms Davies said yesterday:

"We established August 1, 1995, as the first date from which prices were affected by Peter Young's irregularities."

She said an investor who had bought £6,000 worth of European Growth Trust Income units in March 1996 and held them until September would have lost £1,047. How-



Nicola Horlick was the subject of suspension

ever, since the compensation payable of £955 based on the index performance still did not restore the fund to the original capital invested. Morgan Grenfell is paying an extra £92 to make up the difference, plus £40 for the delay, based on a 6 per cent interest rate.

In putting together an index to calculate compensation for investors, Morgan Grenfell compared 80 funds for the European Growth trust and European Capital Growth, and ten for Europa.

The eight months have been difficult ones for Morgan Grenfell. While still recovering from the blow dealt by Peter Young, it faced the row over Nicola Horlick, the "superwoman" pension fund manager, who was suspended in January amid allegations that she was about to defect to a rival firm.

L&G joins the direct pensions club

Legal & General is to start selling personal pensions over the telephone, in a move which will bring it into direct competition with such household names as Virgin and Marks & Spencer. But this week the company was unable to explain why its plan would apparently produce a higher return than that of its nearest rival on price. Flemings' charges on the L&G pension are higher.

This underlines the often opaque structure of pension charges, which have come under fierce attack from consumer groups and MPs. Pensions designed to be sold over the telephone are meant to be simple for investors to understand

because the provider does not give advice.

L&G says that someone putting £100 a month into its plan over 25 years would end up with a fund of £95,200. In L&G's comparative chart, the same amount saved in a Flemings pension would produce £94,000.

According to L&G's figures, supplied by Flemings, L&G levies an upfront charge of 3 per cent, a monthly plan fee of £1.50 and an annual management charge of 0.5 per cent.

By contrast, Flemings charges an upfront fee of just 0.5 per cent, no plan fee and an annual management charge of 0.5

per cent, falling to 0.25 per cent for investments of more than £10,000. Adrian Boulding, L&G's pensions director, could not explain why Flemings' lower charges resulted in a lower estimated final fund. Ian Overage, Flemings' marketing manager, confirmed L&G's figures for Flemings were correct but could not shed any light on the apparent discrepancy.

The new L&G pensions will be cheaper than those sold through its own salesmen or via independent financial advisers because customers will not pay the salesman's commission. L&G staff will not be licensed for customer-specific advice.

SARA MCCONNELL

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Raiders sail in as investment trusts hit the doldrums

Investment trusts are in the popularity doldrums. Shunned by institutional and private buyers alike, they have now slumped to their lowest price relative to the FTSE 100 in four years.

A report, to be published next week by Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, claims that the whole investment company sector could be "sliding into relative obscurity."

With news like this, investors are unlikely to embark on a trust-buying spree. But behind the adverse publicity, a dispute is raging among analysts. Some agree that investment trusts are in trouble; others say that this sector is now offering its biggest bargains.

According to Credit Lyonnais Laing, the investment trust market is burdened by an oversupply of shares, particularly in the large generalist trusts. And fund managers have developed a habit of launching new trusts each time prices improve. However, this surplus in itself could be a bonus for investors.

Investment trust prices are determined by the demand for shares, rather than the performance of funds as with unit trusts, which are priced by dividing the value of the fund by the number of units issued. When investment trust supply exceeds demand, shares are sold at a discount to their value as a proportion of the company's assets (known as net asset value). Since 1994, oversupply has meant that the average discount has more than doubled from 4 per cent to 11 per cent.

This increase in discounting across the entire sector means that with high quality trusts there is now a disproportionate gap between performance and popular appeal, according to John Korwin-Szymonowski, investment trust analyst at SBC Warburg. "Discounts are generally used to reflect the quality of the funds concerned, but we are now seeing traditionally premium-rated stocks at discount prices," he said.

"At the moment you can buy

Nathan Yates on whether this is winding-up time for some trusts, or a chance for bargain hunters

quality very cheaply, and investors should take advantage quickly because this situation will not last."

Investors who succeed in selecting cheap top performing funds could reap the investment trust "double whammy" of solid long-term returns plus a short-term profit if the discount narrows and prices rise.

Research published this month by HSBC James Capel shows several investment trusts are now breaking through their habitual discount levels.

Against that, Credit Lyonnais Laing's report predicts no upturn in prices. It believes that investment trust discounts will widen further and rates as high as 20 per cent will become standard.

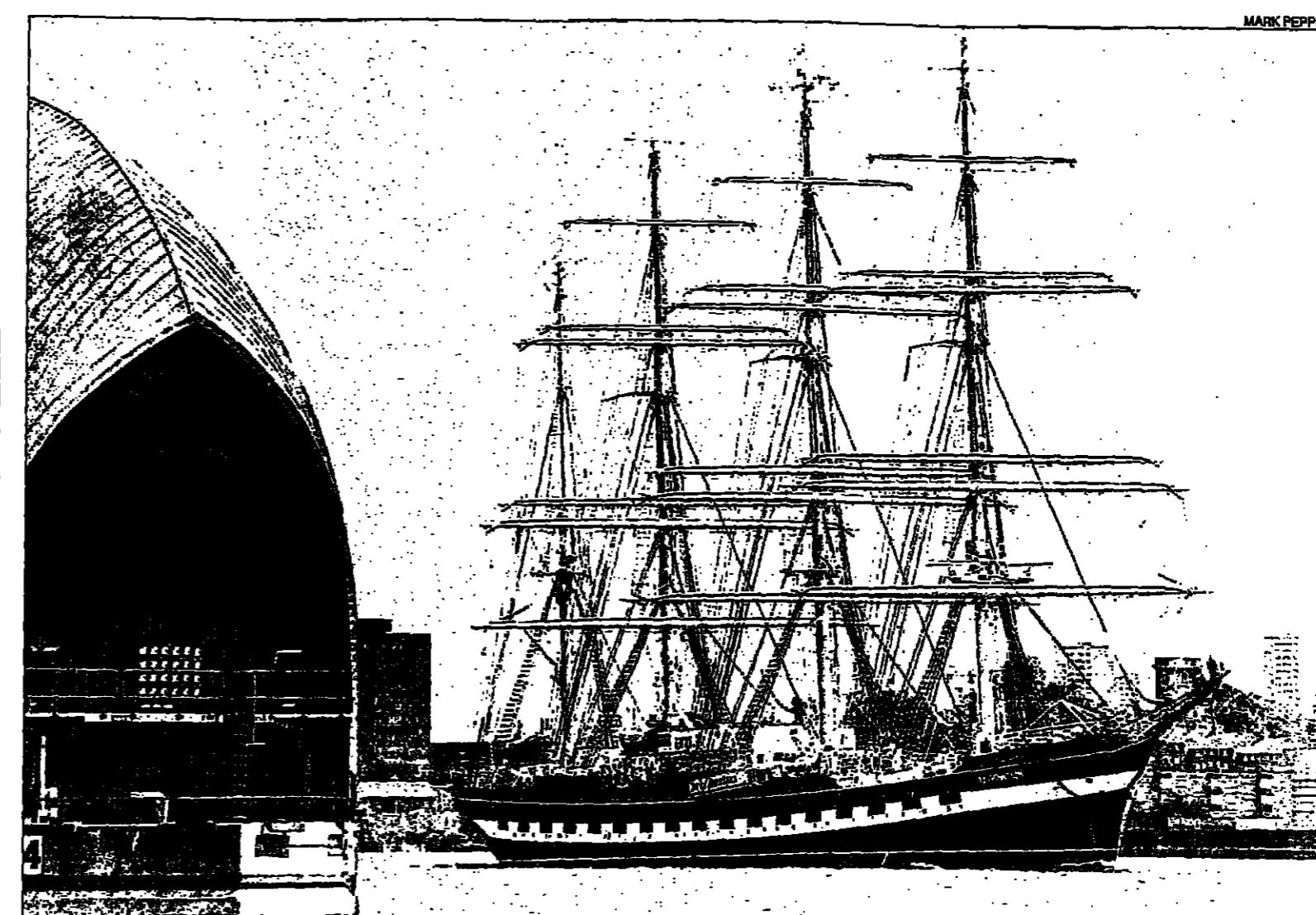
An upturn in investment trust prices depends upon the return of institutional buyers into the sector. Credit Lyonnais Laing's argument is that major buyers have permanently lost interest in investment trusts.

Some analysts believe that a wave of takeover deals is imminent for the poorer performing investment trusts, and investors could reap benefits from these.

"There is a lot of collective American money building up and buying investment trusts is something of a heads you win, tails you do not lose scenario right now," said Mr Korwin-Szymonowski. "If you invest in a trust and it does not perform sooner or later it is likely that an arbitrageur will wind it up."

Carolyn Cook, of NatWest, is one of many analysts who disagree with Credit Lyonnais Laing.

"At the moment you can buy



London bound: analysts think a wave of takeover deals is imminent for poorer performing trusts, as foreign investment companies build stakes

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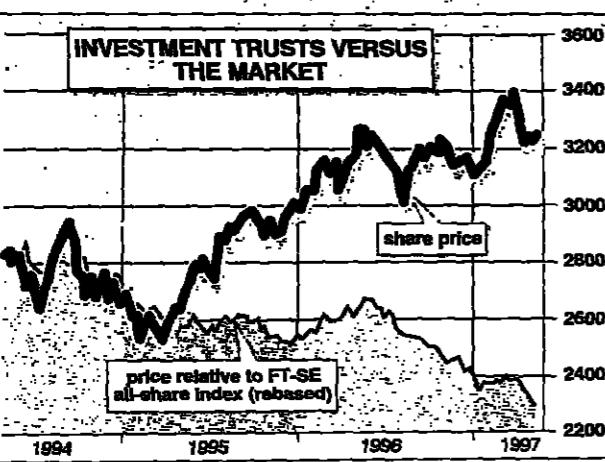
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THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Sharelink to deal on election night

Sharelink, the execution-only stockbroker, has announced that it will be operating a share dealing service throughout election night on May 1. The service will allow Frequent Traders Club members to deal while the London market is closed between 4.30 pm on election day and 8.30 am the following morning. Call 0900 810810.

□ Whether you have £50 or £50,000 to invest at home or abroad, it pays to spread your money, says the latest Which? Books publication, *Which? Way to Save and Invest*, priced at £14.99, will help you to devise an investment strategy to maximise your money, as well as guide you through the complexities of share ownership. Available from bookshops or Which? Ltd on 0800 252100.

□ A new range of fixed-rate savings accounts with interest rates of up to 7.15 per cent gross per annum will be introduced on Wednesday by Birmingham Midshires. The minimum investment is £5,000. Call 0645 720721.

□ If your personal pension is being reviewed at the moment, a useful factsheet published by the Securities and Investments Board explains what may happen next and how to speed the process up. For a copy, call 0171 382 0830.

□ Cheltenham & Gloucester has launched an instant transfer account paying 6 per cent gross per annum on the minimum investment of £1,000. Call 0800 742373. C&G has also introduced a two-year fixed-rate bond, available for a limited period only, paying a guaranteed annual return of 7.10 per cent gross. Call 0800 717505.

LIZANNE ROSE

their financial affairs via PC software. The second will be a stand-alone Barclays PC Banking Service that will allow customers to pay bills and check balances. Call 0800 000097 for more details.

□ A new range of fixed-rate savings accounts with interest rates of up to 7.15 per cent gross per annum will be introduced on Wednesday by Birmingham Midshires. The minimum investment is £5,000. Call 0645 720721.

□ If your personal pension is being reviewed at the moment, a useful factsheet published by the Securities and Investments Board explains what may happen next and how to speed the process up. For a copy, call 0171 382 0830.

□ Ten million customers could be carrying out their banking through a PC by 2005, according to research by Barclays Bank. In order to meet the needs of those wishing to bank from home, Barclays has launched two PC banking services. The first will offer a link with Microsoft Money 97 and enable customers to manage

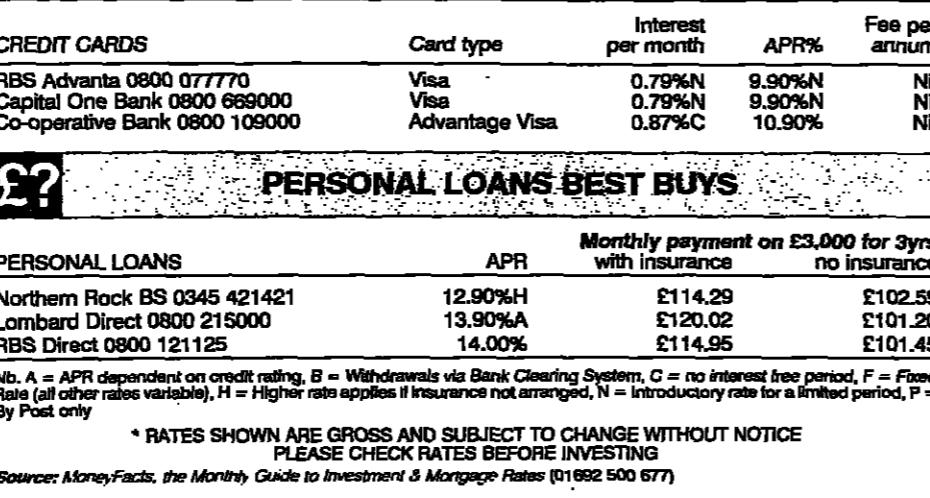
SAVERS' BEST BUYS

INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Sainsbury's Bank 0500 405080	Instant Access	Instant	£1	5.75	Y/y
Cheltenham & Gloucester 0800 742437	Instant Transfer	Inst 8	£1,000	6.00	Y/y
Northern Rock BS 0500 505000	Select Instant	Postal	£5,000	6.35	Y/y
Bristol & West BS 0800 202121	Instant Postal	Postal	£10,000	6.40	Y/y

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Nottingham BS 0115 9564422	Postal Plus	30 day p	£2,500	6.40	Y/y
Northern Rock BS 0500 505000	Select 60	60 day p	£25,000	6.70	Y/y
Scarborough BS 0800 590578	Scarborough 100	100 day	£1,000	6.30	Y/y
Leopold Joseph 0171 588 2323	100 Day Notice	100 day	£10,000	6.54	Y/y

FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Fixed+feeder a/c	5 year	£8,575	7.55	F/Y/y
Bank of Ireland (GB) 0800 971971	Fixed+feeder opt	5 year	£3,000	7.50	F/Y/y
West Bromwich BS 0990 143668	5 year	£3,000	7.00	Y/y	
Monmouthshire BS 01633 840454	5 year	£1,000	7.00	Y/y	

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING



Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01892 500 677)

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME		
Rates as at April 24, 1997		
Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year		
1,000	Hambro Assured	4.35
5,000	GE Financial Assur	5.90
20,000	GE Financial Assur	6.05
50,000	GE Financial Assur	6.15
2 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.15
5,000	GE Financial Assur	6.15
20,000	GE Financial Assur	6.25
50,000	GE Financial Assur	6.35
3 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.85
5,000	GE Financial Assur	6.83
20,000	GE Financial Assur	6.83
50,000	GE Financial Assur	6.83
4 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	6.10
5,000	GE Financial Assur	6.71
20,000	GE Financial Assur	6.81
50,000	GE Financial Assur	6.91
5 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	6.15
10,000	GE Financial Assur	7.30

Source: Chamberlain de Broé 0171 434 4222. Net rates, income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

PIBS		
FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price
Birmingham Midshires	9.975%	100.20
Bradford & Bingley	11.825%	128.35
Bradford & Bingley	12.000%	143.60
Bristol & West	13.375%	148.37
Britannia	12.000%	144.23
Coventry	12.125%	143.82
First National	11.750%	127.50
Halifax	8.750%	100.63
Halifax	12.000%	134.64
Leeds & Holbeck	13.625%	145.58
Newcastle	10.750%	120.38
Newcastle	12.625%	140.40
Newcastle	12.625%	142.28
Northumbrian	12.625%	143.17

GROSS COUPON BUYING PRICE
OVERSEAS

Cheshire (08/09/97/09/98) 11.200% 101.00

First Nat (09/09/97/09/98) 9.1200% 100.00

PBS = Permanent interest-bearing shares
Source: ABN AMRO House Govt — 0171 601 0101

SHARE IN FOCUS: ALLIANCE & LEICESTER FIRST WEEK OF DEALINGS

Source: First Direct 0171 555 5555

Source: Chamberlain de Broé 0171 434 4222. Net rates, income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

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For All Our Guests			-4%	PACIFIC PORTFOLIO	156.49	160.22	+ 0.13	9.75	255.70	255.90	+ 0.02	9.75	84.31	85.70	+ 1.79	1.75	10.30	10.50	10.50	+ 0.00
ABRASITY & LLOYD UNIT TST MTRS LTD			-4%	US Equity Fund	111.11	111.11	+ 0.00	0.00	22.50	22.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.63	10.63	+ 0.00	0.00	10.50	10.50	10.50	+ 0.00
General Acc	736.40	703.50	+ 11.20	2.27	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
UK Growth Acc	102.00	102.00	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
UK Growth Fund	256.20	247.10	+ 4.40	2.41	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Globe Int Acc	214.50	233.60	+ 0.40	2.50	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Globe Int Inc	91.51	96.25	+ 0.17	3.50	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Europe	325.70	320.20	+ 5.40	3.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Brit Exch	103.50	107.00	+ 1.00	2.50	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Brit Projects Inc	103.50	103.50	+ 0.36	4.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Global Opps	103.50	110.30	+ 1.10	2.11	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Japan Acc	71.11	71.11	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Japan Fund	30.50	41.00	+ 1.25	3.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Asian Part Acc	37.90	40.30	+ 1.00	1.95	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
ABERY UNIT TST MTRS LTD			-4%	COF CHARITY FUNDS	817.00	816.50	+ 11.17	4.13	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
General Acc	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
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Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
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Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.45	10.45	+ 0.00
Investment Fund	103.50	103.50	+ 0.00	0.00	10.45	10.4														

RACING

Gosden's colt looks pick of Derby hopefults

By RICHARD EVANS

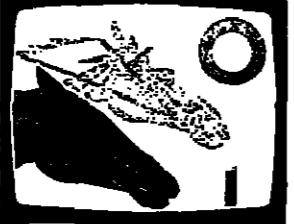
RACING CORRESPONDENT

A CELEBRATED rogue and a modern-day rascal attempt to steal the glory at Sandown this afternoon by landing the day's two feature races — the Threshers Classic Trial and the Whitbread Gold Cup.

Benny The Dip, who is likely to start favourite for the Derby trial, takes his name from a New York pickpocket and like his half-brother, Beggarman Thief, featured in Damon Runyon stories. But unlike his literary namesake, the son of Silver Hawk is no scoundrel. Far from it.

The winner of three of his five starts last term, including the Royal Lodge Stakes at Ascot, the colt displayed progressive form and a likeable attitude. He twice defeated Desert Story, winner of the Craven Stakes at Newmarket last week, and has been showing up well on the gallops at home.

John Gosden has won four of the last five runnings of this



much one to treat with caution," the Halifax experts opine.

Like many temperamental unreliable horses, Harwell Lad is not short of ability and he is a particularly fine jumper of fences. However, unlike most scallywags, he still manages to win his fair share of races and a spell of hunting with today's rider, Rupert Nuttal, seems to have sweetened him up.

A victory at Worcester in December was followed by a decent effort at Chepstow recently. If he descends to put his best foot forward, Harwell Lad can pull off a shock result at the main expense of his stable-companion, Bishops Hall, who is well treated on his best form.

Garnwin will be fancied to resume his winning ways in the Brewers Fayre Novices' Chase (2.50), but the likely favourite could make Kenmore-Speed a value proposition. Sue Smith's progressive chaser has been running over an extended three miles but should not be inconvenienced by today's shorter trip at this stiff track.

Tamure may need the run in the David Lloyd Leisure Gordon Richards Stakes (4.45), while Bequeath could be rapped for toe over this trip. Al-Royal beat Wixim in the Earl of Sefton Stakes and that form received a boost when the runner-up landed the Sandown Mile yesterday. Henry Cecil's progressive four-year-old should appreciate today's extra furlong.

The best bet may be away from the gaze of the television cameras with Irish Accord (5.15 Sandown) making considerable appeal now that he steps up to a mile.

The Michael Stoute-trained Tanaasa (5.05 Leicester) should make short work of his rivals after the victory of his galloping companion, Regal Patrol, at Beverley on Thursday.

While Benny The Dip is a charlatan in name only, the same cannot be said about Harwell Lad, whose doubtful reputation makes him the longest-priced of three Robert Alner-trained runners.

On several occasions he has shown a willingness to pull himself up during races and fully justifies his *Timeform* squiggle, confirming he is a dodgy customer. "Still very

Wixim confounds Charlton with battling win

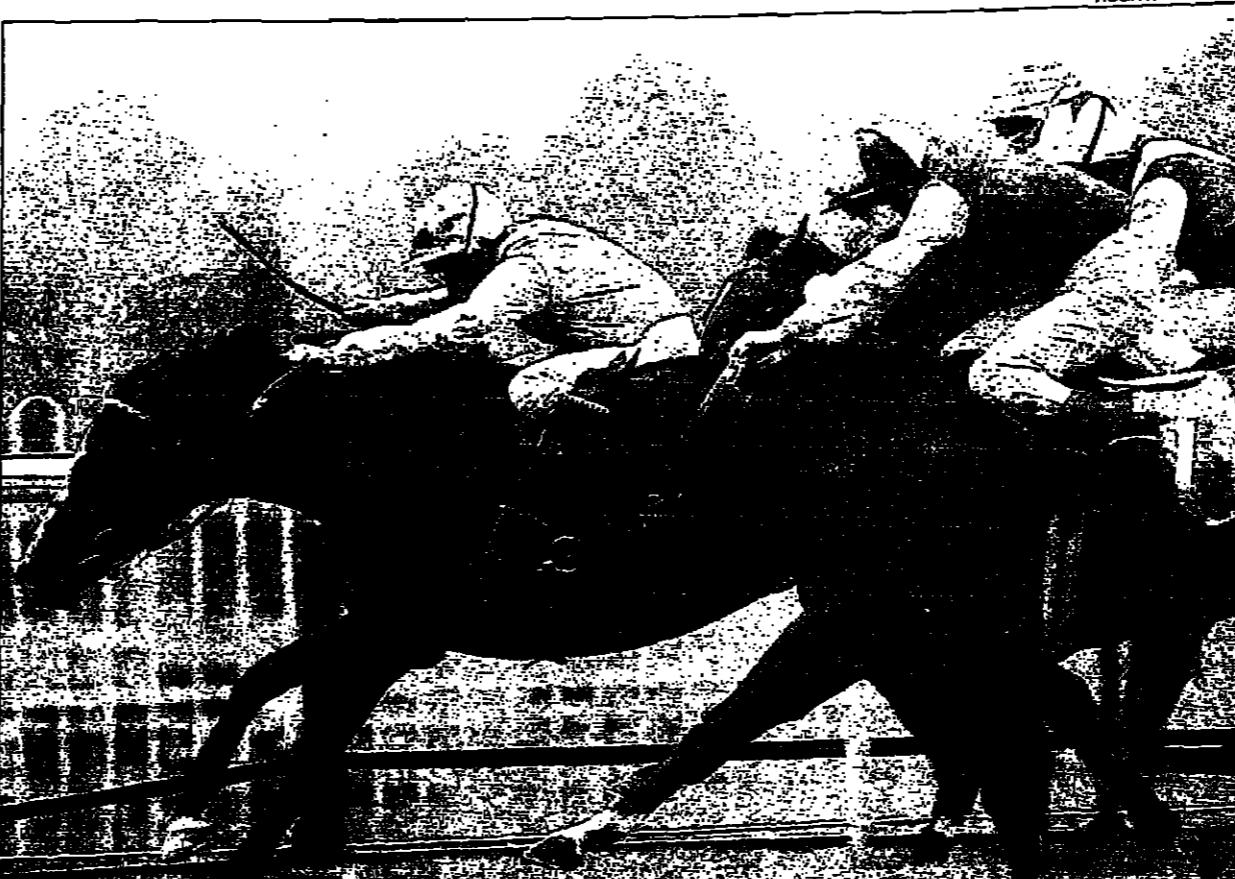
BY JULIAN MUSCAT

ELEVEN months of frustration dissolved before the eyes of Roger Charlton yesterday when Wixim, as brittle as he is talented, held off the determined challenge of First Island to claim the group two Sandown Mile.

Patient as he is the Beckhampton trainer believed Wixim a spent force when a succession of injuries kept him off the track for much of last season. The horse is made of stern stuff, however, and he summoned it to maximum effect here as First Island, set a testing assignment from the rear of the field, threatened to pull the race from the fire.

Indeed, even with his 6lb penalty, First Island looked poised to snaffle Wixim as he ranged up to Pat Eddery's girls approaching the final furlong. But the five-year-old's effort flattened out — rather curiously as it turned out, for he rallied to good effect when Michael Hills put down his whip in an act of resignation.

There will be other paydays for First Island, who now heads for the Lockinge Stakes. But Wixim fully deserved his moment of glory, his courage seeing him through some unfriendly jostling as he attempted to settle the issue. It quickly became evident that the colt was blameless, the trouble con-



Wixim withstands the late challenge of First Island, nearside, to capture the Sandown Mile yesterday

cerning the errant passage of Gothenberg, who ran his best race in fourth place. It was the diminutive Bill Rosie who suffered most; he did well to secure third place in the circumstances.

Charlton, whose first turf winner of the season this was, almost withdrew Wixim from the contest earlier this year. "I wasn't keen to run him, but he was treated in Newmarket over the winter and there was no other suitable race for two months," the

trainer said. "There was always something wrong with him last year. I thought he was a lost cause at one stage but he was treated in Newmarket over the winter and came back in great nick."

HUGH ROUTLEDGE

ously believe the 2,000 Guineas candidate requires shaking up from his home complacency. But Sangster's aspirations for Romanov in the Irish equivalent were suspended when the son of Nureyev advertised his immaturity in winning the Tudor Conditions Stakes.

An impressive individual, Romanov gave John Reid all sorts of problems before buckling down to catch Harry Wolton close home. It was a thoroughly composed performance from Reid, who nursed them cajoled and finally forced this three-parts brother to Balanchine to the front — all accomplished with a measure of restraint. "The horse dropped his bit turning into the straight and I thought that was the end of it," Sangster said. "We might have to miss Ireland and give him some more education."

Royston French was fortunate to escape injury after a nasty fall from Shouk in the April Maiden Fillies' Stakes, won impressively by Sean Woods's Oaks entry, Ukraine Venture.

There will be plenty of parking space around Sandown today for the Whitbread Gold Cup. A series of security measures will restrict parking near the racecourse but alternative sites, with regular shuttles to and from the track, should ensure minimal disruption for racegoers.

SANDOWN PARK

THUNDERER

2.15 Alpen Wolf 4.10 Besiege
2.50 Fine Thyme 4.45 NEEDLE GUN (nap)
3.30 Yorkshire Gale 5.15 Rapier
5.50 Bilko

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 4.10 Besiege, 4.45 SASURU (nap).

GOING: GOOD, GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES
SIS
TOTE JACKPOT MEETING
DRAW: 5F, HIGH NUMBERS BEST

2.15 PIZZA HUT MATURED STAKES

(2.70-2 colts and geldings: £3,571; 5f 6yd) (10 runners)

1st (1) ALPEN WOLF (P) (Hans W 6-11) J Field
2nd (2) FINE THYME (P) (Hans W 6-11) K Fallon
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5th (5) EMPEROR NAEMH (9) (M) (Hans W 6-11) P Eddery
6th (6) HON JUSTICE (D) (Albion) T Bolding & 11
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8th (8) ROMAN GOLD (P) (Hans W 6-11) R Hedges
9th (9) KENMORE SPEED (P) (Hans W 6-11) J Fortune
10th (10) SMOOTH SAILING (2) (A Parc) K McNeilly & 11
Smooth Sailing (Sports Mania) B Madson & 11

BETTING: 9-4 Hon Justice, 5-1 Desire Calls, 7-1 Emperor Naemh, 8-1 Basic Style, Smooth, 10-1 Smooth Sailing, 12-1 others.

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3rd

GOLF: OLAZABAL'S HEARTWARMING ACE TRUMPED BY ROZADILLA

Ballesteros's caddie fails to beat the cut

FROM MEL WEBB IN MADRID

ANOTHER chapter in the time-honoured battle between Severiano Ballesteros and the bag-carrying classes ended yesterday when Ballesteros and his caddie sacked each other. So what's new?

Ballesteros had just completed a round of 73 in second round of the Spanish Open at La Moraleja II when he announced that he and Martin Gray, his caddie for a little over a year, had parted company. He made it sound like a mutual decision, but there are a few out-of-work football managers around who could write a PhD thesis on the principles of what constitutes mutual consent. Usually, all that is mutual about it is that employer and employee agree that the underling has just been fired.

Ballesteros was positively june- real when he broke the news. "I want to tell you that Martin is not going to coddle for me any more," he intoned sombrely, as though announcing that his favourite dog had just been run over. "It seems that Martin has been disappointed with the way I have been playing."

Thus far, it sounded like Gray had taken the initiative to pull out of the partnership, but Ballesteros got closer to the truth, one suspects, when he added: "It seems to me that he did not have much energy on the golf course. We also had a little disagreement on the 6th hole, and it was after that that we

decided to have a break from each other." Ballesteros put his ball into a lake on the 6th. Need more to be said? Mutual consent? One thinks not.

Over the years Ballesteros has swapped caddies more frequently than Indians have changed their government. The count easily reaches double figures, and included in the list have been some

SCORES

Great Britain and Ireland unless stated

LEADERS AFTER TWO ROUNDS: 136: M James 67, G Bjorn 69, L Westwood 69, D. F. C. Barton 70, E. P. Paynter 70, T. E. Price 70, J. A. S. Johnson 70, G. Coles (Can) 70, S. T. Garibaldi 70, C. W. Whittle 70, P. Michael 70, D. G. Norman (Aus) 70; E. P. Paynter 71, G. Bjorn 71, D. F. C. Barton 71, S. Tornatore 70, T. O. C. Ricca (Ital) 70, T. J. Ozobza (Slov) 71, T. A. F. Valera (Spa) 72, J. A. S. Johnson 72, G. Coles 72, P. Baker 73, 68; 2: Cooper (Aus) 72, B. P. Lohner (Spa) 71, T. D. Edmond (Swe) 73, 68; P. Lawrie 72, H. Davis (Aus) 71, G. Bjorn 72, 68; D. Howell 70, P. A. Hunter 70, 71.

of the best in the business. Some have stuck at it, some have had much shorter periods of office — Joey Jones, the Liverpudlian who had the job for only five weeks, is still in dispute with Ballesteros over his dismissal.

If Ballesteros's form this season — five appearances, five missed cuts — had been repeated here, Gray would have at least walked

away no worse off. It is a small irony, however, that he got his marching orders on the very weekend that Ballesteros made his first cut of the season, on one under par.

The poisoned chalice that is a job as Ballesteros's caddie has been taken over for the rest of the tournament by Raul, his 16-year-old nephew. Ballesteros Jr, who plays off 2.4 himself, can only hope that familial blood runs thicker than water in Uncle Seve's veins this weekend.

Mark James, meanwhile, put together his best performance since he beat Jeff Maggert 4 and 3 in the singles in the 1995 Ryder Cup. James dove to 116th in the order of merit last year, by 84 places his lowest finish in 21 seasons in Europe, but here he has scored 67 and 68 to finish on nine under par, two ahead of Lee Westwood, Thomas Bjorn and Roger Chapman and three in front of Jahn Pyman, Eduardo Romero and Rolf Muntz.

The final punctuation point was put on the day when Jose Maria Olazabal had a hole-in-one with a six-iron on the 17th. There was a car on offer for an ace at the hole, but Olazabal failed to collect — Jose Rozadilla had performed the feat earlier in the day. Olazabal, it is pleasing to report, showed plenty of energy on the golf course when the ball disappeared.



There was no disputing who was boss when Ballesteros parted ways with his caddie yesterday

Lyle family fortunes looking up

SANDY LYLE, who returned to a putting style he discarded years ago and recruited his wife, Jolande, as his caddie, had an opening round of 66 in the Greater Greensboro Chrysler Classic in North Carolina to share the lead with Mike Hulbert and Robert Damron.

The Scot, who won this tournament in 1986 and 1988, birdied the first three holes of the Forest Oaks course on which players were allowed preferred lies after recent heavy rain.

He had seven birdies in a six-under-par round which left him a stroke ahead of a group including Tom Kite, the US Ryder Cup captain, and Steve Elkington, of Australia, leading money-winner on the US PGA Tour this season.

Lyle, who had a 79 in the opening round of the Heritage Classic last week and missed the cut, said: "That left me feeling pretty low. I played very badly and the frustration level was through the roof. My caddie [Max Cunningham] sacked me and I wasn't sure how I was going to handle this week."

Lyle, 39, looked no further for a new caddie than his wife, who used to carry her husband's bag occasionally, but has hasn't done so recently. He changed his putting stance after watching a tape recording of his victory in this tournament 11 years ago. He noticed that he stood with his hips square to the target in those days and, reasoning that he had nothing to lose, reverted to that style. Not once did he three-putt.

Scores, page 51

Barber booked for double

POINT-TO-POINT BY CARL EVANS

WHAT does a clerk of the course do when watering has commenced and rain starts falling? "We carry on," Richard Barber said yesterday from his Dorset farm, scene of the Seavington meeting tomorrow. "We had a storm this morning and it's drizzling now but that would not be enough."

As predicted, the start of the cricket season has induced some movement in the heavens and not a moment too soon for the point-to-pointing fraternity. However, the rains have come too late for the postponed Berks & Bucks and abandoned East Sussex & Romney Marsh fixtures, both crippled by hard ground.

Barber travels his exciting pair, Earthmover and Strong

Chairman, to the Berkeley meeting today. Julian Pritchard's double at the Colswold on Wednesday gives him a lead of six over Tim Mitchell in the men's title race.

Strong Chairman should reduce Mitchell's deficit, while Poly Gandy and Earthmover look too strong for Alison Dare's choice of Split Second Sams Heritage in the ladies' race.

Jones could be leading the women's championship tonight, having joined Shirley Vickery and Polly Curting on 16 winners last weekend. Jones has winning chances on Corina Moss, Gunner Boon and Keep Floring for David Brace at the Llanegain today, while her association with Robert Williams's Touch

N' Pass should reap the ladies' open.

Touch N' Pass, a winner four times this year, keeps fit working for his owner's Bridgend trekking business but a rumour that Curling and Vickery tried to hire him for the rest of the season seems to be untrue.

TODAY'S MEETINGS: Athelstone at Cilton-on-Dunmore, 2m 6f Rd Race 2.00; Berkley, Woodford, 15m N of Bristol (2); Fete, Balcombe Mains, 3m N of Lewes (2.00); Langrish, Margam, 2m N of Port Talbot (2); Llanegain, Powys, 1m N of Ludlow (2.00); Tiverton Steeplechase, Bratton Down, 10m N of St. Merton (2.00); York (2.00).

TONORROW: 1:1, Rafford, A. Rafford, 2m 6f, Newbridge NH course (2.00); Mid Devon, Black Forest Lodge, 15m N SW of Exeter (2.00); Seavington, Littlecawthorpe, 3m S of Cleethorpes (2.00); Fakenham, Norfolk (2.00); 2:00, Berks & Bucks, Barbury Castle (postponed to May 25 at Kington Blount); E Sussex & Romney Marsh fixtures, both crippled by hard ground.

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RUGBY-UNION: DALLAGLIO SEEKS REWARD FOR WHITE AND GREENWOOD WITH LEAGUE TITLE UP FOR GRABS AT FRANKLIN'S GARDENS

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

If WASPS clinch their second Courage Clubs Championship title this afternoon, it is not just the obvious candidates who will merit the applause. Equally deserving are the unsung senior servants, Mike White and Matt Greenwood. Amateur or professional, no club functions without such players, whose qualities are appreciated most by those who play alongside them.

Both had something to do with Wasps' previous triumph, in 1990. White, now 30, played in the back row of the side that beat Saracens on the same April day that Greenwood, 32, then a No 8, helped Nottingham to beat Gloucester, and so allowed Wasps to come up on the rail.

"It will be nice when guys like Buster [White] and Matt get the reward they deserve," Lawrence Dallaglio, the Wasps captain, said this week.

It is Northampton who stand in the way of Wasps' first bite at the league title cherry: they require no more than a draw — either from the game at Franklin's Gardens today or, next Saturday, against Harlequins at The Stoop — to bring the silverware to Sudbury, or Loftus Road (where they will play all their matches next season) or wherever their trophy cabinet now dwells. Moreover, Dallaglio takes a sardonic pleasure in noting that he is the only Lion-in-waiting at Wasps while Northampton boar five.

"White is a very underestimated player and he's part of an excellent back-row unit," Ian McGeechan, the Northampton director of rugby, said. So underestimated that not once has he played in the England A team; Greenwood at least enjoyed 13 appearances, mostly on tour in New Zealand and Canada, with the national second string before moving from the Midlands to London and from the back row to the second row.

It is players such as these who have earned the respect of the young Turks at Wasps, who underpin the flashier exploits of the Greenshirts and Logans and have helped Chris Sheasby to national recognition this season. But they, in turn, will acknowledge the contribution of another old Wasp, Gareth Rees, this season. Rees played in the 1986 cup final as a teenager before continuing his peripatetic career in Canada, France and Wales, before the wheel turned full circle.

"Rees has been very important to Wasps, keeping the momentum going when perhaps there has not been great momentum in their rugby," McGeechan said with feeling, since he may recall the six penalty goals kicked by the Canadian which beat Northampton 18-13 at Loftus Road just after Christmas. But Rees also offers the experience from full back which points others in the right direction at critical moments. Andy Gomarsall returns at scrum

half for Wasps against Matt Dawson, who leads Northampton in the continued absence, with a neck injury, of Tim Rodber. But Paul Grayson, the England stand-off half, continues to rest the hip injury that has kept him out of action for seven weeks; McGeechan, who reckons he has only seven fits backs to throw into the fray (though four of them have been, or will be, British Lions), plays Alastair Hepher at No 10 and hopes to restore Grayson in one of the club's two games next week.

Harlequins are the only team to have won at Franklin's Gardens in the league this season. This afternoon, they entertain second-placed Leicester, who restore Joel Stransky at stand-off and give young Lewis Moody a run at blind-side flanker.

Harlequins include Dominic Chapman on one wing and Darren O'Leary, who will now travel to Argentina with England next month, on the other, but the national selectors will continue to review their

back-up strength in the belief that the Lions will make demands on them and that John Fowler, of Sale, is a possible withdrawal.

Fowler, who has damaged cruciate and medial ligaments, will miss the Pilkington Cup final on May 10 and has little prospect of being fit in time to tour, hence an England presence at Coventry's match with Bedford today, where the form of Dan Grewcock in the second row will be monitored. But Fowler is only one of eight Sale players struggling with injuries and a squad of 30 travels to Bath with selection postponed until this morning.

West Harlepool, doomed to relegation, have appointed Mike Brewer as their director of rugby after the dismissal of Mark Ring earlier this week. Brewer, the former Canterbury and New Zealand back row forward, has been assisting Brian Ashton with Ireland this season and will take up his new position in time for the next campaign.



Stransky: back for Leicester

Jarvis can prepare foundations for future prosperity

By GERALD DAVIES

AMONG the ruins of Cardiff Arms Park, as the old ground makes way for the new, Cardiff and Swansea will play out what is positively the last rugby match at the old stadium this afternoon. But, before the season fades, and the place turns to rubble, a little quibble should have an airing.

With the turf and all the other nicknacks going under the auctioneer's hammer this weekend, one would hope that the powers that be might care to hang on to the talismanic name and not adopt something so blandly unexpressive, anonymous, and, in these days of commercial imperatives, totally unbrandable appellation as the Millennium Stadium.

Although I suffer my share of it, this is not simply sentiment. Who, in the 1999 World Cup, will want to buy a T-shirt with the utterly unmemorable "Millennium Stadium" stamped on it? Wembley, too, will soon change, but the name, quite rightly, will not. It reverberates throughout the sporting world, as does Cardiff's temple to rugby. An inspiration to poetry not a bureaucrat's prose.

At any rate, it would be marvellous to think that Lee Jarvis, 20, at stand-off half for Cardiff today, may get to pursue his ambitions and, when the day comes, to display his precocious gifts in the Wales jersey at no place other than the Arms Park. In this, the 26th year of the cup competition, the young player is likely to play a vital role.

In a season when, for the

most part, he has had to play second fiddle to Jonathan Davies, and has consequently been unable to appear in the first-team colours every weekend, Jarvis has managed to accumulate 144 league points. Some 129 of these have come from his right boot. He has played, in one position or another, in all four of the cup rounds and scored 64 points.

He has been in top form of late. While Robert Howley stole the headlines with three tries, Jarvis collected 16 of Cardiff's 36 points in their semi-final against Llanelli. It seemed hardly to matter to

TEAMS

CARDIFF: J Thomas, S Hall, L Davies, M Hall, N Walker, L Jarvis, R Howley, A Lewis, J Humphreys, L Musto, H Taylor, P Stewart, D Jones, G Jones, C Williams, S Pritchard, G Jenkins, M Taylor, S Gibbs, S Davies, A Williams, A Booth, I Bucket, G Jenkins, S Evans, A Reynolds, S Moon, P Arnold, R Appleton, S Davies, Reardon, D Davies (Llanelli)

him that the six successful chances he had at goal were from various distances and angles. It was self-assured kicking of the highest order.

Swansea will be looking for much the same from Aled Williams, who has been chosen ahead of Arwel Thomas at stand-off half. Thomas, who resumed playing only last weekend after a two-month absence with a knee-ligament injury, is not fully recovered.

That he played when his team lost to Newbridge, who are at the bottom of the first division, cannot have helped his case for inclusion.

Bunting appointed to refereeing position

THE Rugby Football Union (RFU) has appointed Nick Bunting as its national referee development officer, in succession to Steve Griffiths, who is now working for the International Rugby Football Board (David Hands writes).

Bunting, 35, and a former B-grade referee with the East Midlands Society, has proved an imaginative training officer, whose team will be increased when divisional appointments are made for the North and the South West.

Colin High, the former international referee, is to manage the development of elite referees for the RFU.

In the Super 12 match in Christchurch yesterday, Can-

terbury Crusaders inflicted further misery on a depleted Gauteng Lions team. Gauteng, who lost heavily to Auckland Blues last week, were beaten 23-0 by a Canterbury side that had previously only won twice in the tournament.

Canterbury were indebted to Andrew Mehrtens, the New Zealand stand-off half, whose kicking and defensive work on a soggy Lancaster Park pitch were the most notable features of a frustrating game.

Hugh McLean, the New Zealand international who co-founded the New Zealand Barbarians, died on Thursday at the age of 89.

SWIMMING: TWO-YEAR SUSPENSIONS FOR ANABOLIC STEROID OFFENDERS

China bans four more after drug tests

By CRAIG LORD

CHINA has reported another four positive drug tests among its swimmers, taking to 23 the number of Chinese to have been suspended from the sport this decade. The circumstances of the tests mean, however, that China as a nation will not be suspended for two years, as might have happened.

Nor will the guilty four, three of whom failed anabolic steroid tests and one of whom had an illegally high testosterone/epitestosterone (T/E) ratio, serve four-year suspensions because the infringements were committed shortly before the four-year rule came into force last year.

One man and three women, all ranked outside the top 30 in the world and therefore not national team members, have been suspended for two years after testing positive at the national championships in Gothenburg last week after a

report from the Chinese swimming federation sent to Fina, the international governing body, in February this year. Three coaches have also been suspended for two years.

The delay was said to be "normal", given the procedure of testing and subsequent appeals. Cornel Marculescu, the Fina director, said: "Nations are now obliged to report positive tests. China has done that. They are fighting against drugs there and are taking action themselves."

Six months to a year is a normal reporting period given the decision, the analysis and the procedure of appeal."

The T/E ratio infringement was committed by the male swimmer, Lu Qiang, while the women, Yu Ran, Pu Shu and Chen Jialin, were suspended for having taken an anabolic steroid.

The news follows China's return to form at the world short-course championships in Gothenburg last week after a

poor show at the Olympic Games last year. At the 1994 Asian Games, seven Chinese swimmers tested positive for anabolic steroids a month after the world championships in Rome. Two world champions, Yang Aihua and Lu Bin, were among those suspended for two years.

According to rules agreed at the Fina congress at the Olympic Games in Atlanta last year, a whole nation will be suspended from all international competition for two years if four of its swimmers test positive for anabolic steroids within a 12-month period.

However, a loophole, designed to provide national federations with an incentive to test swimmers and report violations, states that the nation will not be suspended if it reports positive tests of its own accord. The whole-nation ban applies only if Fina drug-testers catch the culprits, but not if they are detected by their own federation.

SAILING: TURNER PAINTS ATTRACTIVE PICTURE OF SINGLE-HANDED VENTURE

Britons to ride on crest of new wave

By EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

MARK TURNER has done his fair share of top-level ocean racing. There was a Whitbread Round the World Race at the age of 22, five round Britain races, a two-handed transatlantic race and a round Europe race. So far, though, he has never tasted the challenge — or the loneliness — of long-distance single-handed racing.

In September he will fill that gap in his CV when he sets off from Brest on the Mini Transat — a single-handed race across the Atlantic that will finish in Martinique 4,200 miles later.

Turner, 29, will be joined on the startline by Ellen MacArthur, a fellow Briton, who made a name for herself in 1995 when she was made BT young sailor of the year after becoming the youngest person to sail single-handed round Great Britain at the age of 17. Their

emergence is a welcome sign that single-handed ocean racing could be back on the increase in this country, buoyed by the heroics of Pete Goss and Tony Bullimore in the Vendée Globe race.

Turner bought his "Mini" class yacht last year and has been preparing it in Hamble. "Right now there is huge interest in single-handed racing," he said. "Even among the rock stars of sailing in Hamble, there is great interest in what I am doing which has really amazed me."

Turner will be up against a predominantly French fleet, led by full-time professionals such as Bernard Stamm, the France-based Swiss, and Thierry Fagnant. "There are two or three guys who have the best boats, the best budgets and are very good yachtsmen," he said. "If I can get in the top five, I'll be absolutely ecstatic," Turner said yesterday.

The race, which originated in Britain in 1977 but has long since been taken over by

the French, is sailed in powerful monohulls of just 6.5 metres in length. In many respects, they are like pocket Open 60s — the Vendée class — combining unrestricted and innovative sail plans with swing keels, twin rudders, dagger boards and water ballast. There are no engines and communications are restricted to VHF radio. Sailing a "Mini" is all about speed — 14 to 16 knots of it downwind — endurance and discomfort.

Turner and MacArthur have found sponsorship hard to come by. MacArthur has borrowed money from his parents to buy a second-hand boat, while Turner is hoping to secure a deal with the Isle of Wight to use his campaign to promote the island.

Turner launches his boat in three weeks, after which he will begin his preparation on the water, which will include the Mini Fastnet and the Trans-Gascogne races.

Rudge Vale to unport

FOOTBALL

Rudge leads Vale closer to unlikely port of call

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

IT MIGHT sound ridiculous — Port Vale, members of the FA Carling Premiership — but fantasy could edge closer to reality tomorrow when they play Wolverhampton Wanderers at Vale Park. Victory for Vale would keep alive their hopes of a Nationwide League first division play-off place and also finally erase Wolves' chances of automatic promotion into the promised land of the Premiership.

Little wonder John Rudge, Vale's genial and long-serving manager, is billing it as the biggest game in the club's history. Though he rarely indulges in pre-match hype, even he is excited about the possibilities.

"I doubt if we have ever had a more important fixture," he said. "We know we have to take all three points and we'll have to go for it from the off. There will be no holding back. It's bound to be a tremendous

I'd have been surprised, but they've kept getting results all season when people haven't expected them to. They've done really well."

Vale, who won 1-0 at Molineux in October, could again meet Wolves in the play-offs. "That's entirely possible," McGhee said, "and that's why we'd rather not lose this time. We don't want to give them any sort of confidence booster ahead of another possible meeting."

Jon McCarthy, the Vale winger, has been given special permission by Bryan Hamilton, the Northern Ireland manager, to play tomorrow. He will then fly out to Yerevan, where Ireland are playing Armenia in a World Cup qualifying match on Wednesday.

Among the numerous promotion and relegation issues at stake, Brighton are likely to attract the most attention, especially if they fail to beat Doncaster Rovers at home in the third division. It is the final match at the Goldstone Ground and could prove Brighton's last game in the league for some time.

If they lose and Hereford United take a point from their trip to Leyton Orient, Brighton will drop into the Vauxhall Conference. It would also nullify the importance of the clubs' closing fixture of the season on May 4 — against the top division.

History and form point to a Brighton win, which would take the issue on to Edgar Street next weekend. Brighton are unbeaten in 12 matches at the Goldstone since Steve Gritt took over as manager, winning eight of those last nine. Doncaster have not won in seven visits to the south coast club, scoring only one goal.

There is no room for complacency," Gritt said. "A lot of people are looking at our side again and thinking we should win it, but you often get kicked in the teeth in those circumstances. The players are really ready for it and we will go out with the same attitude we have taken into each other.

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Dick Knight, who became Brighton's new chairman this week, predicted an emotional day. "It is a new era for the club," he said. "It is the last game at the Goldstone, historic for that reason alone, but it is equally vital in our fight to stay in the league. I'm sure the team can rise to the occasion."

With several of the other Premiership contenders jostling for position last night, Rudge should go into the game knowing the points total required if they are to finish above their play-off rivals.

Mark McGhee, Birmingham manager, is not unusually generous with his praise, but paid tribute to the job Rudge has done in his 13 years at the Potters' club, mostly with only limited funds at his disposal.

"I've got tremendous respect for John and what he's achieved," McGhee said. "He's often had to sell his best players and make a profit on them, but he's still done brilliantly.

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CRICKET: YORKSHIRE AND ESSEX APPEAL AS LIKELIEST CHALLENGERS TO CHAMPIONS IN BATTLE FOR RECORD PRIZE

Surrey aiming to put on Sunday best again

PLenty of voices in cricket are regularly raised against the Sunday league. Some blame it for declining standards, others simply condemn it as an exhausted formula ready for redundancy. Abolitionists are rife. Tomorrow, however, it enters its 29th season and, no matter what reforms are applied to the county programme next year, rest assured that the league will remain.

The rationale for its existence has always been that it provides a brief and easily understood style of cricket at a time accessible to a young audience. This is still a logical and powerful argument, one that will persuade the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to retain it, no matter how many interested parties, including a number of

counties, may canvas for its extinction.

Changes are not discounted, however, and the Sunday element of the equation is far from sacred. Experimentation with floodlit games in midweek — there will be at least three this summer — will be encouraged, especially if television companies are supportive. The ECB has a healthy envy of the popularity of the FA Carling Premiership and playing the league games on different days of the week, it believes, could heighten the league's appeal.

Now that the dreaded "Sunday sandwich", when championship fixtures were interrupted, has largely been eliminated by a change of starting day for four-day games, the number of overs could be increased

Alan Lee previews the new season of one-day league cricket that gets under way tomorrow

to 50, improving the product and recreating the league as one of only two, rather than the present three, county one-day events.

This, though, is at least one-year distant, probably more. For now, under its latest title as the Axa Life League, the parameters that have survived most of the league's life will stay in place as Surrey defend the one title they have won in the past 15 years.

Dave Gilbert, the immensely influential coach at the Oval, is as much motivator as technical adviser and he insists that the relief and

reassurance gained from winning the league will unlock the door to higher honours for his team. He may be right.

Surrey have not begun auspiciously in the county championship, where for some years now their potential has far outstripped their performance, and the sceptics among us need some convincing that they have reformed their entrenched habit of spinelessness in the long-distance games.

The sprints, however, are a different matter and although the leading bookmakers beg to differ, three of

them preferring the chances of Warwickshire, Surrey deserve to start favourites to win this title again. They bat at a higher tempo than most opponents, can boast enough genuine all-rounders to suit this form of the game and have acquired a proven match-winner in Ian Salisbury.

The development of the Hollingsworth brothers, perhaps even the competition between them, promises to be a feature of this season and, although Surrey will feel the absence of Brendon Julian on Sundays, they should have Chris Lewis available for the majority of the summer and will have the emerging Alex Tudor to give bite to their bowling.

Nottinghamshire lost out only on run-rate last season but, even allowing for the eccentricities of 40-overs

cricket, it seems inconceivable that they can come so close again. They bat at a higher tempo than most opponents, can boast enough genuine all-rounders to suit this form of the game and have acquired a proven match-winner in Ian Salisbury.

The BBC and Sky Television will both screen live matches through the summer, the satellite channel opening up tomorrow with coverage of Nottinghamshire's game against Worcestershire at Trent Bridge. Surrey start at home against Somerset and there will be sympathetic interest in Durham's attempt to equal last year's miserable tally of one win when they play Lancashire at Old Trafford.

COLIN McMILLAN, the former World Boxing Organisation featherweight champion, yesterday announced his retirement from boxing. McMillan lost his British title to Paul Ingle in January and has now decided to pursue a career outside the ring.

"I didn't want to rush into a decision," McMillan, 31, said.

"I wanted to think it through and weigh up everything and now I feel it's time for me to call it a day and move on."

"I couldn't get motivated for the last fight against Ingle. Once you've fought at world level, it's hard to get yourself motivated for other fights against some of the young, hungry guys who want to get your scalp on their record as a former world champion."

Bowls: Tony Alcock, the world outdoor champion, forced his way back into the frame for a place in the semi-finals of the Mazda Jack Higgs international singles tournament in Sydney yesterday when he scored an exciting 7-9, 9-7, 9-8 victory over Kevin Walsh, of Australia.

David Gourlay, the 1996 world indoor champion, from Prestwick, was beaten in straight sets by Roma Dunn, of Western Australia, whose 9-2, 9-3 victory will revive calls for the inclusion of women in leading events.

Squash: Wales reached the final of the men's European team championship for the first time with a 3-1 win over France in the semi-finals in Odense, Denmark yesterday. Their opponents today will be England who beat Finland 4-0 in the other semi-final.

It looked as though Glamorgan had lost their chance when Andy Moles, the acting captain, and Graeme Welch, the nightwatchman, survived 19 of the 24 overs they were due to face when play finally got under way. Not only was luck running Warwickshire's way in the form of mis-hits falling safe, but each batsman had a life.

Robert Croft, diving to his right at slip, could not hold a half-chance when Welch, on 31, flashed hard at Darren Thomas. Then, when Moles was 37, Alan Evans, one of the two substitute fielders, dropped him at leg slip, also off three victories.

TENNIS: Michael Chang, the No 1 seed, narrowly avoided defeat at the hands of Juan Alberto Viloca, of Spain, in the United States men's clay court championships in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. Chang eventually overcame Viloca 6-2, 6-7, 7-5 to reach the quarter-finals.

HOCKEY: A record 143 riders start today in the three-stage Procam Classic, the fifth event in the Premier Calendar competition. The race, based in Beverley, Yorkshire, has attracted the best-field of the year. Rob Hayles has a clear lead with three victories.

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ATHLETICS: LINDA RADLEY, 1, understand, has become world champion in the 400m hurdles, England's first since 1988. Radley, 26, from Wiltshire, beat Maryam Mirzai, 21, of Iran, and 105, in 52.74s. Radley's win came in the final of the European Championships in Gothenburg, Sweden, yesterday.

AUSTRALIAN RULES: RICHARD COOPER, 21, of Victoria, has been named in the Australian national team to play in the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane, Australia, in July.

BASEBALL: DAVID BROWN, 21, of the United States, has been named in the England team to play in the European baseball championships in Prague, Czech Republic, in June.

TABLE TENNIS: RADFORD, 21, of England, has been named in the England team to play in the European table tennis championships in Prague, Czech Republic, in June.

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to be won for
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big show
gardening . 5

THE TIMES

weekend

Low point
for the
women
high flyers
Ginny Dougray . 11



SATURDAY APRIL 26 1997

Hordes of London arts and media types will soon be weekending together in the country, Jane McCarthy reports



Nick Jones, owner of Soho House, a London club for the "new generation of contemporary professionals", outside Babington House: he talks dreamily about plans for lakeside cocktails, poolside barbecues and dinners on the terrace

Have we got news for you

As a chill April wind blew across the Somerset landscape, the visitors from London turned their collars up, anxious to confound any notion that they might be soft. Richard Knatchbull, the landowner, stood untroubled either by the temperature or by this bunch of newcomers from metropolitan clubland, who were here to discuss the cricket field needed for their new club in the country.

The shivering Londoners included Nick Jones, who owns Soho House, a private London club for a "new generation of contemporary professionals". His mission: to transform nearby Babington House, five miles from Frome, into a country retreat for his members.

This field, a hundred miles from Soho, is a far cry from the club's rambling Georgian building in Greek Street, where the bright young things from the world of media and arts and New Labour congregate. A succession of small cosy rooms at "The House" ensures privacy from swivelling heads syn-

drome. Tony Blair's office chose it as the venue for a quiet Christmas meal, and friendly relations with the party are assured because Gordon Brown's close friend Sarah Macaulay heads the PR company representing Soho House.

But down in Somerset, Mr Jones's negotiations over the cricket field were running into problems. Neither party professed to know much about the game; how much land would they need? Might they need a souther? And, asked by Mr Knatchbull's son about nets, one of the Soho House contingent replied that, well yes, they would be essential to stop the ball going too far over the boundary.

When it came to knowledge of the land, the confusion was one-sided. Surveying the field in question, one of Mr Jones's party remarked that at least it was only grazing land. The wind stirred the level rows of green oat shoots.

Yes, the Londoners had initially been regarded with suspicion. Mr Jones told me later, but relations between the two sides had thawed

in the months since his initial approach. We were standing on the magnificent drive that sweeps under its avenue of trees towards Babington House, which for generations had been owned by Richard Knatchbull's family. Now Mr Knatchbull, owner of large areas of nearby land, will watch with a neighbourly interest to see what the metropolitan types will do with his ancestral home.

At a cost of £4.5 million, Mr Jones is aiming to provide his members with a country retreat on a 17-acre estate comprising several small lakes, extensive gardens and woodland, a coach house, lodge, and rococo Georgian chapel. Contracts have been exchanged and work is due to start on October 1 to create 30 bedrooms, restaurants, bars, a sports complex including a 25-metre pool, gym, tennis and squash courts, croquet lawn, plus a cinema and editing suite.

Explaining his plans, Mr Jones says: "There will be nothing pretentious about it; our members don't want frills. But they do want a place

in which they can relax and feel comfortable." The venue may be a far cry from the grime of Soho's streets, but the ethos of the club remains: good service in intimate surroundings with the guarantee of discreet staff and the company of like-minded people.

In his decision to introduce Soho clubgoers to fresh air and clean living, Mr Jones is not alone. His near neighbours in London, the more famous, and senior, Groucho Club is planning a similar move. Last week a meeting of Groucho representatives discussed buying a country retreat in Wiltshire.

The Groucho, a notorious bolt-hole for media movers and showbiz shakers opened in Dean Street, Soho, 12 years ago, plays down the highly publicised antics of Liam Gallagher and others, insisting that its staff learn not to be impressed, whether they are serving Chris Evans, Mick Jagger, Stephen Fry or Lenny Henry.

Mary-Lou Sturridge, the general

manager, says: "Most people don't want fawning service. For those who do, Groucho is the wrong place." Like Soho House, it offers various bars, restaurants, club rooms and function rooms — the scene of many a glittery gathering, whose hosts have included Madonna, Eric Clapton, Bill Wyman and Bob Geldof.

In January the club canvassed its members about a country club, which it had discovered at a remote spot near Tisbury. Described as a "solidly built 1930s sports club surrounded by the idyllic woods and valleys of Wardour Castle", members were promised tennis, swimming, croquet, cricket and "abundant walking, fishing and shooting country". Probably more to their tastes is the offer of a "cosy sitting room, reading room, games room and a warm dining room/bar serving wholesome, unfussy food".

Both clubs intend to provide an alternative to weekending in a cottage or in what they see as overpriced country house hotels, where the rules outnumber the

guests and where what you wear is more important than who you are. Ms Sturridge and Mr Jones talk dreamily of open log fires and wooden floors.

The Groucho aims to return its rather unprepossessing pavilion, called the Pythous Club, to its former colonial splendour, with verandas, French windows, shutters, weather-boarding and a copper roof intended, like its members, to go green with age. Babington House is altogether grander, with ornamental fireplaces, elaborate plaster-work, wooden paneling, grand oak staircase and walls lined with Gainsboroughs.

Despite the plans for a cricket field, Mr Jones doubts the sporting intentions of his members, dwelling instead on the attractions of lakeside cocktails, poolside barbecues and dinners on the terrace. It's a vision which, voiced as it is in tones of boyish wonder, could suggest a lack of realism. But with the success of Soho House in the past two years behind him, Mr Jones has a credibility belied by his

artless manner. Membership for his club, which costs £300 a year, stands at £1,500 and is closed. Funds for his new venture will in part come from share options, the launch party for which will be on board a luxury yacht at the Cannes Film Festival next month.

As we pace his estate the enthusiasm mounts and, like a small child let loose in Hamleys, he indicates various aspects of Babington and outlines his plans.

At the derelict farm buildings, he announces: "This is the unique health club"; inside the woodstore ... "this is the 25-metre pool, half open-air and half under cover"; peering into the old milking parlour ... "ah, the gym"; gesturing towards the ice-house ... "we want to put a hot tub in there"; and over by the largest lake ... "I'd like to put trout back in. There's not enough air I think, but I don't know much about that."

It is such a lack of knowledge that raises the alarm with the owners,

Continued on page 2

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I once witnessed the most astonishing act of shoplifting; so astonishing, in fact, that I believe it changed — in a small way — the course of shopping history. I have not breathed a word of this story for almost 19 years.

It was the summer of 1978 and I was coming up 14. In the old village around which my suburb had grown, there were two sweetshops. One was run by an upstanding man called Mr Davis. He wore a brown coat like Ronnie Barker in *Open All Hours*. He was not stupid; his counter was covered by a plastic shield thick enough to stop bullets, let alone the grubby hands of thieving teenagers. We called him Mister.

The other shop was run by Harry Hedon. We called him Spaz. Harry's shop was in an

ancient, tiny, low-ceilinged cottage. It was divided in two: the papers and sweets to the left of the entrance, the groceries to the right, a small hallway in between. The assistant in one half could not see the goings-on in the other.

In the summer of 1978, presumably because he was a struggling small businessman trying to keep costs down, Harry made the catastrophic mistake of employing only one assistant in his fatally bisected shop. Harry did not appear there himself until early afternoon — he was an unshaven, disorganized man — so each morning his elderly, naive female assistant became a sitting target.

One day I was sitting on the bench outside the chuchardy where I used to spend a regrettably large amount of my summer

holidays. Two older boys approached. They were the sort of boys who confound the liberal emphasis on the importance of social conditions in the formation of character. Both lived in huge houses set in leafy grounds, indeed the father of one of them was a millionaire, yet both were about as bad as bad could be in suburban 1978. The millionaire's son used to suck cola ice pops and then spit the brown gunge over his dog's head. The dog was a pure-bred Samoyed, so it showed. That was the kind of person he was.

The other boy had a brother, also bad. That brother now appeared in the distance, standing

SERIOUS SHOPPING

SHOPLIFTING



ROBERT CRAMPTON

next to the public telephone box at the bottom of the road. He waved to the first two boys and went into the phone box. I chose that moment to go into Harry's shop to

replenish my supplies of Curly Wurlys. Turning left into the sweets' section, hearing the assistant go to answer the telephone (Harry had put his phone in the storeroom behind the grocery section of his doomed shop), I waited to be served.

"I don't think we can supply 144 Scotch eggs at such short notice," Mr Smith, the assistant was saying in a harassed voice. "Yes, we can do the sausage rolls, but I think you should let the vicar know that he may have to look elsewhere for the catering packs of bread buns." Someone was obviously negotiating a complicated order. I was contemplating com-

ing back later, when the two older boys walked purposefully into the shop. Their faces were set grim. One was carrying a haversack.

They weighed me up and obviously decided, correctly, that I presented no threat. They both walked around the back of the counter, in itself a shocking act. One put his forearm at the end of a shelf of cigarettes, and began to scoop packets of Players No 6 into his haversack. The other — the one who spat on his dog — rang open the till. I was amazed. He took about £25, and then moved round to the legal side of the counter.

Very carefully — this has always stuck in my mind — he selected two packets of Callard and Bowser butterscotch and put them in the haversack on top of what must have been about 60 packets of

cigarettes. Then they left. They had been in the shop about 30 seconds. The assistant was still on the telephone — they were on to possible desserts by now — so, very quietly, I left, too, having decided I could make do without any more Curly Wurlys that morning. Two days later, Harry put up a sign. It said: "Only two schoolchildren at one time." The words stable, door and horse come to mind, and so it proved for poor Harry.

Those signs are everywhere now, but that was the first one I ever saw. I do believe they were invented by Harry Hedon, failed confectioner and grocer, and that thus I witnessed — and, through my 19-year silence, participated in — a small but significant sociological event.

Light and shades

Plain lampshades are looking distinctly passé among the new generation of bold designs in adventurous materials. Bare lightbulbs can now be designer dressed in steel creations, sculpted plastic, exotic silks and even zip-on spinnaker fabric. Sophie Chamier sheds light on some of the classiest styles around

From left to right, standing:

Two Zipcode shades by Totem Design, from £45 each. The powder-coated wire frames are covered with brightly coloured zip-on jackets of spinnaker material. Jackets are available separately in red, yellow, white, blue and green (0171-727 3280/0171-243 0692)

Light-in-a-bag Image Lights (complete with all electrical parts), from £19.95. Interchangeable shades, £4.99 each, in 20 different designs ranging from literary quotations to ancient art, from Heal's, 196 Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171-636 1666) and branches; The Gadget Shop, 16 branches nationwide (01482 860860); further stockists (01398 324224)

Zanzibar silk shades in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours, from £35; Casbah lamp stand £99, from Mr Light, 279 King's Road, SW3 (0171-352 8398) and 275 Fulham Road, SW10 (0171-352 7525)

From left to right, hanging:

Taco polypropylene shade, £20, by Vyvyan Rose in red, yellow, blue, green or off-white, from Purves & Purves, 83 Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171-580 8223) and by mail order from Ocean (0800 132985)

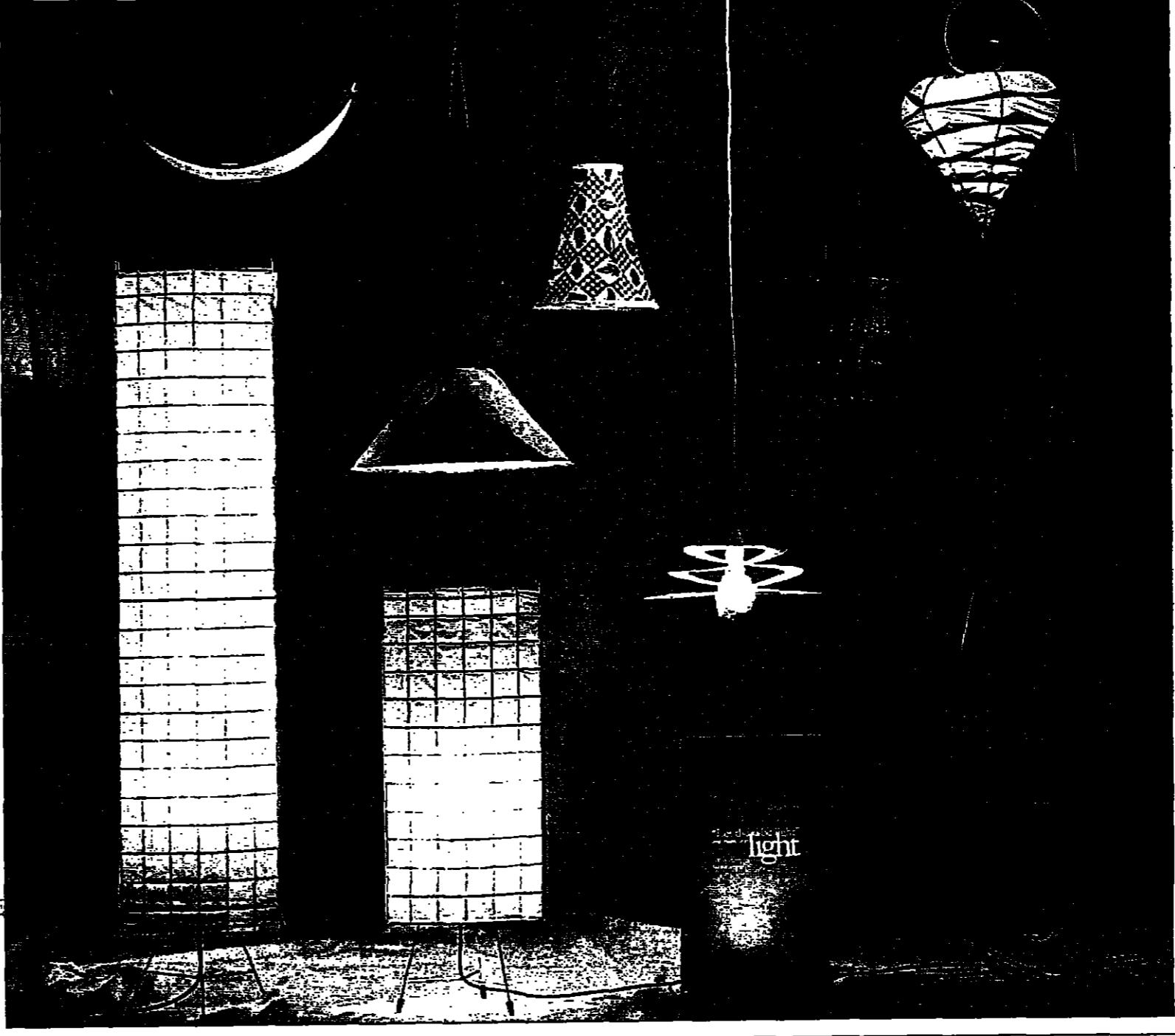
Hand-made paper shades by Andrea Maffin with 22ct gold leaf. Orange Squirrel, £45 plus £5 p&p (mail order 0171-284 1224)

Fruit and Veg cone shade, £45 (p&p extra), from Chandlers for the People (mail order 0171-376 4992)

Chris Laughton's spiral-effect shade in aircraft quality plywood, £25 (p&p £1.50), from Elemental (0171-802 3752 for mall order and stockists)

Ribbon chandelier shade in Ivory, burgundy, coral or Prussian blue, £35-£39 depending on size, from selected branches of Alders nationwide (0181-256 7730)

Photograph by Des Jenson. Styling by Caroline Griffiths



IS YOUR HAIR THINNER THAN IT WAS A FEW YEARS AGO?

In a recent survey of 500 women, a staggering 33% reported hair loss.

One of the reasons for hair loss in women is nutritional. 10 years' research has now produced an effective supplement: it's called NutriHair®.

In a recent survey 33% of women stated they had experienced hair loss in recent years, and that this caused them distress and anxiety. It is perfectly natural to lose some hair every day. But if you feel your hair loss is increasing or you have less hair than you used to, then NutriHair® could be of real help.

"I have about a third less hair than I used to have. Nobody believes I have a problem because I still have a lot of hair but I know its changed and I am very worried."

NutriHair® could be for you if you can answer yes to any of these questions:

1. Do you have less hair than you used to?
2. Does more hair fall out when you shampoo, brush or comb your hair?
3. Is there less hair in your ponytail or the amount you can clip back?

The facts about hair growth
Hair growth is cyclical. Each hair grows for up to 3 years and then shed. Its follicle rests for about 12 weeks and then starts growing a new hair. It is normal to lose between 50-150 hairs per day.

But, if the three year growth stage shortens, even just a little, there will be an increase in hair shedding. If this continues for several months the amount of hair will become noticeably less.

The warning signs: more hair in the brush, less hair in the ponytail
If you are losing more hair than you once were it is usually obvious when washing, brushing or styling your hair.

Causes of increased hair loss

There are several possible causes but if you answered yes to one or more of the questions above, then the cause may be a nutritional imbalance.



In trial conditions women using NutriHair® noticed some reduction in hair loss three to four months after starting the supplement. It can take up to 6 months to see the full benefit.

Your first month's supply is free
For the quickest results three tablets should be taken daily for the first three months. After that, just one tablet daily should help maintain maximum hair volume. The special introductory offer price of £29.90 — three packs for the price of two — gives you enough NutriHair® for three months. Then one pack at £14.95 will last you three months.

Your money-back guarantee
Nutri-Hair® is a highly reputable product, only available from Nature's Best. Should you complete the 3 month course and notice no benefit we will refund your money in full. However, it is stressed that the full benefits of Nutri-Hair® are only seen at 6 months. No other company offers you such a guarantee for a hair product. It is based on the confidence we have in Nutri-Hair®.

Any questions?
Our Nutrition Advisors will be happy to answer any questions you may have about Nutri-Hair®. Please call 01892 552175 between 9am - 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

1 01892 552141
MASTERCARD, VISA, SWITCH AND DELTA CARD HOLDERS
8.30am - 6.00pm Mon - Fri and 8.30am - 12 noon Sat.

NATURE'S BEST®
The UK's largest mail order supplier of nutritional supplements

Nature's Best Health Products Ltd., 11 Lamberth Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 3EQ
Registered in England No. 1518391

This increases hair shedding by affecting the hair growth cycle. Nutri-Hair® has been developed by one of Britain's leading hair specialists and is based on 10 years' careful analysis involving hundreds of women. The studies show that the unique combination of ingredients in Nutri-Hair® could make a real difference to the amount of hair you grow.

To: Nature's Best, Freepost, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 3BR. (No stamp needed). Please send me 3 month's supply of Nutri-Hair® at the introductory price of £29.90.

I enclose a cheque/PO for £29.90 made payable to Nature's Best Health Products Ltd. or please debit my Mastercard/Visa/Delta Card no.

Expiry Date _____ / _____
Cardholder's Signature _____
Name Mr/Mrs/Ms _____
Address _____
Postcode _____

Registered in England No. 1518391 <http://www.venda.com/health/nutrihair.html>

'If that Chris Evans comes in here ...'

Continued from page 1
who still view the young pretender to the throne with some wariness. When Mr Jones and Co arrived with a film crew to make a promotional video, and landed the chopper in what you might call the front garden, relations were somewhat strained. Now all is good-tempered, but Mr Jones knows not to assume too proprietorial an air. He rings the doorknob to gain admission to the house which, although his in name, will not be vacated until September.

The lady of the house overhears his comments about moving the kitchen and asks cautiously about the Aga. "We would hate to end up on a skip," "Oh, no," Mr Jones reassures her, "we've got one of those at home." Her husband is anxious to ensure the future of his notable crop of snowdrops and daffodils, and is at pains to point out the hard realities of maintaining such a large estate.

Wayne, the gardener and handyman, confirms that his employer is a stickler for detail but an old-fashioned gent that he respects. The new regime is a source of some concern: "I don't object to change but this place is unique in its completely natural feel — it's not too manicured, like some places. Are they really in love with it like I am, or are they just expanding the business?"

At Pythouse Club, there are no proprietors to raise objections to Groucho's venture. Rather it was they who approached the London club in a final attempt to salvage a decaying monument to a colourful local history. Sir Henry Rumbold, who lives at nearby Hatch and owns the estate, is negotiating the sale of the lease after a series of unsuccessful ventures at the club.

Those who are old enough recall the Pythouse Club's heyday as the meeting place for local high society after the Second World War: there were whisky drives and fêtes, pony club camps, treasure hunts, swimming galas, tennis tournaments and mixed hockey. All this plus four dances a year for £6 a year. The vetting of members was not unlike Soho House and Groucho's: two sponsors and your face, or family name, had to fit.



London haven: the drawing room at the Soho House club

because local involvement is needed to ensure the viability of the whole venture. About 100 local memberships will be offered, local produce and staff sought, the swimming pool will be available for use by the village school and the cricket pitch similarly on offer.

Should Groucho's enterprise fail, it is more likely to come from the inhabitants of nearby Mells, a tranquil village clustered around the Earl of Asquith and Oxford's manor and a 15th-century coaching inn?

Summichards have already expressed opposition to any appearance of London sophisticates, but the inn's landlord, Roger Elliott, himself confident of attracting many new visitors to his Egon Ronay-recommended restaurant, is sure that Soho House can weather the local storm.

Less certain is how quickly Soho clubbers can pass themselves off as seasoned country folk. Back at Babington, one of Mr Jones's advisers shows off his knowledge of the flora and fauna: "That's a primrose. Those are nettles which can give you a very nasty sting if you touch them. Then you have to go and find a hawleaf."

Angus Deayton, a member of both Soho clubs, sees his weekends taking a new turn: "We'll need wall charts and organised nature trails so we can identify what we're looking at. They both seem like places I'd like to try out, although it seems ironic to go to the country to get away from it all only to surround yourself with the people you see all week."

But what about the local members with whom he could fraternise? "What would we talk about — vegetables, children, the weather?"

However incompatible the town mouse and the country mouse prove to be, Soho members have given their clubs' move to the country an enthusiastic response. Deayton speaks for many when he says: "I regard the country as something nice to look at, to stroke and pet for a while before returning to London and reality."



Country lovers? Angus Deayton (left) and Chris Evans

THREE OF A KIND
Wooden soled sandals, or pick of a wide range available.
Flight Line, Green Arches, 10-12, 0171-580 8223.
Centre Block, 10-12, 0171-580 8223.
For right shoes, see page 126.

Stretch and tone

The broad range of today's stretch fabrics can give the illusion of an attractive figure-hugging look whatever your size, says Heath Brown

Fashion is stretched to its limits with the appetite for tight, expandable clothes. This figure-hugging style may seem daunting for those with a less than perfect shape, but stretch trousers, tops and skirts can be a good buy, whatever your size.

Cotton, wool or silk jersey are the perfect materials, but Dupont, which makes Lycra and Tactel, has produced good quality, versatile, synthetic stretch fabrics that are overtaking natural jersey.

The secret is to buy one size bigger than usual, making the item slightly loose but still giving the illusion that it is tight.

For example, a long-line stretch jersey tube dress will still cling to the upper and lower body but will hang a little loose elsewhere, giving less emphasis on a wider pelvis or larger bust.

Simple, tight tops and sweaters are made to go with stretch slacks, while expandable dresses are teamed with elastic banded shoes. If you are lucky enough to have a

well-shaped body, crop tops and new-look leggings can look sporty and sexy. But skirts should not be too tight and, if choosing a dress, look out for the simple styles.

Armed with this knowledge, you can buy a good stretch item whatever your size.

Heath Brown is a fashion writer and stylist based in London.

She writes for numerous national and international publications.

Her book, *Stretch It!*, is published by Dorling Kindersley.

She also runs a successful styling service.

She can be reached via her website at www.heathbrown.com.

She is currently writing a book on men's fashion.

She is a regular contributor to *Woman's Day* magazine.

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GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON

replies to readers' letters

Q What do you recommend for a small orchard infested with woolly aphid? Is there a "green" remedy? — E. Hatton, Carlisle, Cumbria.

A Woolly aphids colonise pruning wounds and bark splits, leading to swelling and sometimes to the admission of canker. Small infestations on one or two young trees can be treated by painting the aphids with methylated spirits and spraying with insecticidal soap. Heavy infestations in old orchards do not have a ready solution, green or otherwise. If you wish to use chemicals, try permethrin, dimethoate, and pirimiphos-methyl.

Q In relation to hedges, could you explain the terms stilted, pleached and espaliered? — D. Corble, London W8.

A A stilted hedge is one with bare stems at the base — on stilt if you like. Pleaching is the horizontal training of branches or twigs to make a screen or windbreak: the effect in summer can be a thin but solid wall of vegetation. An espaliered tree is usually a fruit tree, again with the branches trained horizontally, but producing a tiered structure which allows the light in to reach the fruit.

Q Write to: *Garden Answers*, Weekend, The Times, 1 Penhill Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.

Hungry, horrible and living near you — Stephen Anderton on ways to control the mother of all grubs

Beware the evils of weevils

I had grown *Echeveria* *hurmsii* in pots for years. neat little strongly-branched succulents from Mexico with chunky, tubular orange flowers whose mouths never fully open. And now here they were, just keeling over. I blamed my in-laws who had been house-sitting for us. I blamed their dog. I blamed frost. And then, on closer inspection, I blamed the real culprit — vine weevils.

The moral of the tale is that you can never look too closely at a sickly plant, even if it means digging it up. Of course I should have realised the problem was vine weevil, particularly as I know there is an efficient method of getting rid of them, in pots at least.

Adult vine weevils look like miniature black armadillos, just a bit longer and thinner than a ladybird, and the damage they cause to plants such as rhododendrons, eustomas, hydrangeas and bergonias is largely cosmetic — they crawl up and nibble the edges of leaves at night. Generally they are not as harmful as their grubs, which eat roots. In particular they enjoy begonias, cyclamen and primulas, and because they are busy nibbling underground, it is often only when a plant keels over that the problem becomes apparent.

I grow half a dozen *Echeveria* plants in a pan by the front door in summer.

WEEKEND TIPS

- Prepare celery trenches and holes for runner beans and courgettes with old manure or compost.
- Ensure that lawnmower blades have an undamaged, moderately sharp edge to get a clean, even cut.
- Take 3in cuttings of soft herbaceous plants such as achillea and perennial salvias, set in sandy compost and cover with polythene.
- On nights when frost threatens, cover any plants which flower or grow early (magnolias, wall fruit blossom and so on) with polythene, newspaper or fleece.

They stay out until the frosts and are attractive even after flowering. All the attention they ever get is a splash of water every few days and one quick spray to deal with the blackfly, which in some years descend on the flower buds and stalks.

Older plants grow to a foot or more high, but I prefer to see a group of shorter plants which flower just as well but are less likely to blow over on windy days. Plenty of stone and grit in the compost gives

some counterweight, but growing in a pan is more secure.

Last autumn the pan of *Echeveria* stood under cover of the porch, and when frost threatened I lifted them in for the night. Then, at this half-way stage before they came in for the winter, I had to go abroad, my in-laws came round and when we got back... well you know the rest.

Fortunately *Echeveria* is a great survivor. Tiny white roots began to appear up and down the trunks after a week indoors. Easy then, to chop off these tops, put them in some gritty compost and get them out of that old sour panful well before spring.

B ur in pulling apart the panful, the real cause of the problems was revealed. Among the roots were the fat, creamy grubs of the vine weevil, half an inch long, sickle-shaped, with a brownish-yellow head. There must have been two dozen in that 12in pan.

Vine weevils are much more of a problem now than a few years ago. There are a couple of hefty chemicals to deal with them commercially, but these are not available to amateurs. And buying containerised plants increases the chance of us bringing home grubs in the compost.

Such controls will not work in the cold of a winter garden, but in pots and borders where the soil temperature is above 12C, it is possible to use a microscopic "beneficial" eelworm or nematode, which parasitises the grub, swimming in through the natural

cyclamen and primulas, the perfect food for its grubs. And they are perfect mothers, every one; there are no male vine weevils, so they all lay eggs.

In the warmth of a greenhouse vine weevils can reproduce all year round, but outdoors there is only one generation, hatching in April and laying eggs through the summer. The adults then die. And this is the moment for gardeners to get at the grubs with biological controls.

body openings and killing it within 48 hours by bacterial infection.

Nematodes can be obtained by mail order in a moist compound and are watered on to the soil or pots in August or early September, when the adults should be dead or dying, and while the grubs are active. The nematodes have a short shelf life and must be used by the date specified.

In cases of heavy infestation, it is helpful to reapply nematodes in spring, for a complete clean-up. Because vine weevils are native creatures and live happily in the garden, they will always come back eventually. But in pots at least, there is no need to despair of control.

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● A range of biological controls, including those for vine weevil, is available from: *Defenders*, Occupation Road, Wye, Ashford, Kent TN25 5EN (01233 831221) and *Green Gardener*, 41 Strumshaw Road, Brundall, Norfolk NR13 5PG (01603 75096).

Weevils attack echeveria



Vine weevil grubs (left) eat roots and are more harmful than the leaf-nibbling adults

and stalks.

The weevil's ideal home is a warm pot of peat-based compost, preferably planted with

compost.

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Return of the Victorian playground

Jane Owen finds that many of the gardens at Chelsea this year will have a 19th century theme

Every May the Chelsea Flower Show sets the agenda for the fashion-conscious garden in much the same way as Milan does for the clothes-obsessed.

After years when we have seen everything from a black-rubber sex garden to traditional Jekyll creations and wild 18th-century-style landscapes, 1997 hints at the 19th century, with several Victorian-style gardens being built for the coming show.

Ostentation and the burst of wealth from the Industrial Revolution brought a new driving force to gardens of the 19th century. By the early 1800s Capability Brown-style landscapes fell from favour to be replaced by elements of formal Italianate gardens: urns, balustrading and terraces.

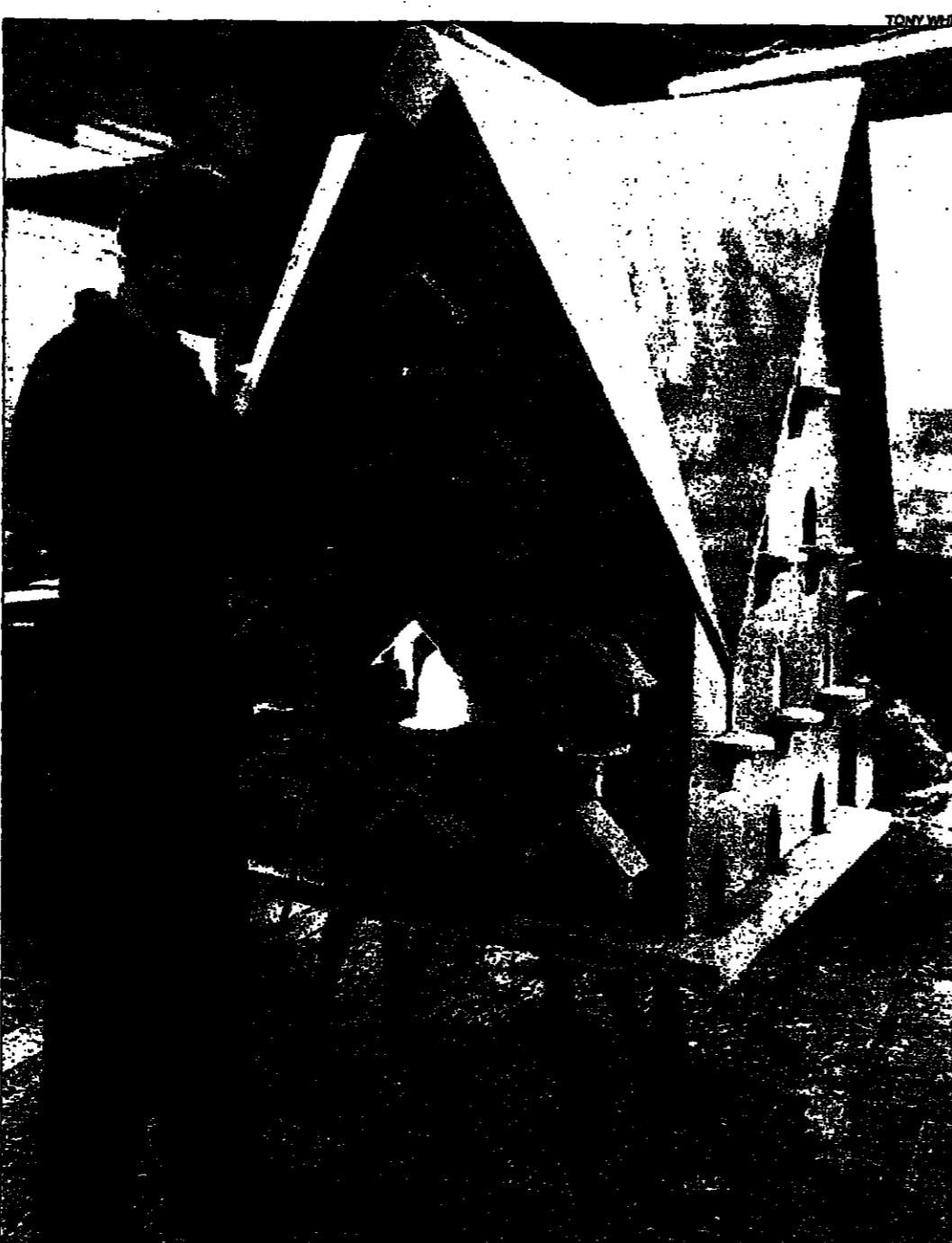
With the new-found wealth and the lure of the Empire and beyond, plant-hunters swept the world for the rare and unusual plants that would become the great status symbols. Vast, heated glasshouses were built to grow exotic fruit and display tender flowers. In summer, huge outdoor beds were laid to show the gaudy plants that were all the rage.

Today, the trend is to grow plants in appropriate positions so that they thrive with as little help as possible. But Victorians grew a staggering range of plants, despite sometimes unsuitable soil or climate.

At best, Victorian gardens were a playground of widely differing styles: stumperies, fern gardens, bedding areas, water gardens and so on, as at Biddulph Grange in Staffordshire and Heligan in Cornwall. At worst they were a mish-mash of styles and ideas.

Alan Sargent, who has built 30 gardens for the Chelsea Flower Show over the years, is one of those who can pick some of the more alluring features and turn them into a coherent Victorian-style garden suitable for today.

For instance, intricate flooring patterns were a great favourite and Mr Sargent uses bricks, all kinds of



Carpenter Neil Staton puts the finishing touches to a dovecote for Bradstone's display at Chelsea

stone, cobbles, pavers and tiny pieces of slate upended to make unusual floor surfaces.

This year at Chelsea he is making a Victorian-style garden for Bradstone, using some of its reconstituted stone Victorian-style features: there will be a workshop posing as a timber gazebo filled with reproduction Victorian tools and ferns.

All the plants he plans to use would have been available in 1890 and, though the garden may not

use any antique Victorian features, it will certainly give a taste of those heady gardening days for the thousands of visitors.

• Alan Sargent, Willow Walk, Petworth, Sussex GU28 0EY (01798 342388), *Damian Grounds, Hortus Ornamenti*, 01243 762 467; *Bradstone Garden Products*, 01335 372222.

Gardens to visit, page 20



Victorian gardens were a combination of widely differing styles

WHAT MAKES A VICTORIAN GARDEN

■ Horse teeth: these, along with tiles, mosaic, basketweave brick and pebbles, were used to make surfaces for terraces, summerhouses and paths.

■ Edging — typically rope-edged tiles: these gave a tidy, clean surround to all borders and lawns, even in small gardens. In cottage gardens, upended oyster shells were sometimes used, packed at the edge of beds.

■ Dahlias and chrysanthemums: two of the most popular flowers. Biddulph Grange in Staffordshire had a whole dahlia garden display in a long border with buttresses of yew.

■ Vegetable garden: crucial part of an estate, which was usually self-sufficient. The vegetables

would be laid out at precise intervals along straight lines.

■ Pampas grass: a great favourite of suburban gardens, and some of the original plants survive.

■ Apples: the most popular garden fruit.

■ Glasshouses: in 1845 the tax on glass was abolished and so began an explosion of glasshouse building for fruit, vegetables and flower exotics. Conservatories, too, were popular as a place to sit and to show off prize specimens.

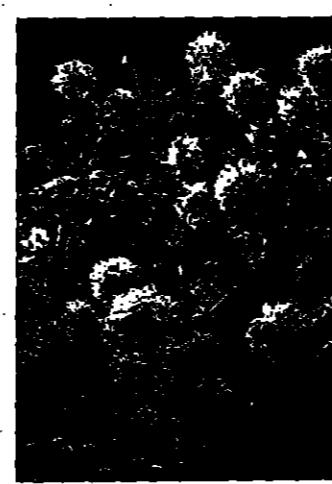
■ Garden gnomes: Sir Charles Isham first introduced them in his alpine garden at Lampart Hall, Northants. He was followed by Sir Frank Crisp at Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire.

■ Bird droppings: lots of guano was imported from the Pacific Islands to fuel the hungry plantings of flowers and vegetables. Goose excrement was popular too and, according to the gardeners of Heligan, Cornwall, was regarded as the secret of growing prize dahlias.

■ Lawns: for tennis, croquet and to set off the dazzling colours of the surrounding bedding.

■ Giant compasses: these were used to give accuracy to bedding schemes.

■ Horn-handled tools: these were introduced to give better grip, so causing less injury to hands.



Dahlias: 19th-century favourite

Win a trip to Chelsea

THE TIMES and Bradstone Garden Landscaping have joined forces to give you a chance to win 75 pairs of tickets to the Chelsea Flower Show in May. Just answer the following questions:

1. The most popular garden fruits in Victorian times were:
 - a. plums
 - b. raspberries
 - c. apples

2. The Victorians used guano in their gardens. This is:
 - a. basketweave brick
 - b. bird droppings
 - c. pampas grass

3. The Bradstone garden at Chelsea will include the following feature:
 - a. thatched dovecot
 - b. a waterwheel
 - c. a swing

Send your answers, with your name, address and a day-time phone number, to: **The Times/Bradstone Chelsea Garden Competition**, London SE99 7VA, to arrive by Tuesday, May 6. The first 75 correct entries drawn after this date will each receive two tickets, worth £14 each, for the show on Thursday, May 22, valid between 3.30pm and 8pm.

Normal **Times** newspaper competition rules apply (available on request). The Editor's decision is final. No correspondence can be entered into.



20th-century favourite

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Rare farm animal breeds are being lost to the passing whims of science and macro-economics in food production. We should save them

A cat may look at a king, so why should an Erisky pony not have a day out at Buckingham Palace? Especially when there vital work to be done. A few days ago in the Royal Mews, where proud, upstanding carriage horses are stabled, there stood the less regal but equally dignified pony making a shameless attempt to draw attention to itself. The world needed to know that the Erisky ponies need help.

The Erisky is one of a dwindling breed of native pony now under the conserving umbrella of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. This pony was helping to launch an urgent appeal for new members. If an appeal brochure should come your way, you will find me looking out at you from its front cover, which is not to say that I am particularly endangered. More importantly, our Suffolk Punches will be looking you in the eye, getting the message across that they, too, need help.

Of course, you may scoff at the whole idea of endangered breeds as a bit of heritage sentimentality. If so, give some thought to the recent announcement that cows may in future be fed a formulated diet so that the milk they produce will

Beware of meddling with nature

DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

result in butter which will spread straight from the fridge. Thank you, science, for this great step forward: mankind will be free from the anguish of taking butter from the fridge only to find the knife bounces off it. Who knows how many people have turned to drink, drugs or violence faced with such humiliation?

If you have suffered this way, do not think you are to blame. It is, of course, the cow's fault. Said an official from the newly privatised food development arm of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (does not the juxtaposition of the words food, privatised, ministry and development not send shivers through your digestive system?): "Cows are vegetarians and what they eat is full of unsaturated fats. Unfortunately, the animals' digestive system converts unsaturated fats into saturated fats. So the milk that comes from the cow is high in the wrong kind of fats."

See, cows know nothing: the Ministry

preserves breeds animal which were a common part of our farming scene until science and macro-economics took over the production of food. The breeds are part of agricultural history: the Large Black and the Gloucester Old Spot pigs, the Red Poll cow, the Norfolk Horn sheep and many others.

All these breeds became "outdated" for one reason or another and were discarded by commercial farmers, who follow fashion in ways that make Edina and Patsy look cautious. Whenever a new breed is developed they grab it eagerly, and it is only years later, when fashions have changed again, that the

value of some of the old breeds is appreciated. So we must not let them vanish.

The folly of discarding unfashionable breeds cannot be overstated. To draw a parallel: suppose that, to speed up the transfer of information in a digital age, it was decided that we needed only 20 letters in the alphabet. Would that be good reason to consign to the bonfire all books using the full 26?

So is it sensible or safe to turn our backs on cows which have served us well to develop new ones which might deliver unnecessary items such as spreadable butter, pre-whipped cream, or milk which can't boil over?

If farming has made one mistake it is in forgetting that there was a partnership between man and nature. It was a game played out on the fields and in the barns; on some days man won, on others nature had the upper hand.

Then came advanced agricultural

science and the balance tipped in favour of the farmer, who could now perform all manner of miracles to save crops from pest and disease, animals from illness, and make fertile land where nothing would flourish. Almost overnight, it changed to become a master and servant relationship.

Or so we thought, because occasionally nature refuses to submit, no matter how tight the grip we place on her. Nature kicked back with mad cow disease, over organo-phosphates, and DDT.

If she kicks again, in some unpredicted way, it may be so viciously that we have to submit and retreat what we thought were giant steps forward to regain a simpler, safer kind of farming.

You can spend your money on spreadable butter if you like. But the army of faithful servants headed last week by that Erisky pony should not be forgotten. We may need them one day.

• *Rare Breeds Survival Trust, National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 3LG (01282 694551).*

• *Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters. Write to Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN.*

FEATHER REPORT

Lulu sings again

WOODLARKS are circling and singing over a few favoured spots in England. If there is one near you, it will not be very hard to identify.

Skylarks rise from the ground almost vertically, and hang in the air by flying at wind speed into the wind. Woodlarks go up with an awkward, fluttering flight, then circle round high in the sky over a wide area, their song showering down.

The songs are also quite different. The skylark's is a sustained sweet note, slightly monotonous, while the woodlark's is wild and lyrical, with a wonderful, recurrent "lu-lu-lu" phrase in it. In fact it is called the *lulu* in France.

Skylarks are common birds of the cornfields and treeless moors, but the woodlark has a much more limited habitat. It needs a wide stretch of bare ground, or ground with very short grass, to feed on, and it needs some scattered trees as look-out posts and songposts. It sings from the top of a tree as often as it does in the sky.

PETER BROWN



The Japanese artist Shigeo Toya at work in Grizedale Forest, Cumbria, on a sculpture called *Underground Tree*, the first in a series of ten works planned for a mile-long trail

FACT FILE

■ Grizedale Forest, three miles south of Hawkshead, Cumbria (0129 860291), has two trails: the nine-and-a-half-mile Siliurian Way and the half-mile Riddings Wood trail for the elderly and disabled.

■ The Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail (01594 833057), 20 miles southwest of Gloucester, is three and a half miles long and starts from Beechenhurst Lodge, picnic site, off the B4226, west of Speech House.

■ The Chiltern Sculpture Trail (01865 723684) is at Cowleaze Wood, near Junctions 5 and 6 of the M40. The two-mile trail starts at a car park about two miles north of Christmas Common.

■ Tyrebagger Sculpture Project (01330 844537). Kirkhill Forest, is about four miles northwest of Aberdeen, beside the A96. It has seven artworks, including five European Bison, by Sally Matthews. She also has three pieces at Grizedale Forest, one called *Wolves*.

■ Kielder Castle Forest Park Centre (01434 250209), about 36 miles north of Hexham, Northumberland, on the B6320/C200, has a small number of sculptures, but expects more this year.

Alex O'Connell
to a beginning

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SEEING POINTS
PARKING

Carving through the forest

Christian Dymond finds there's more to a wood than trees these days. Thanks to environmental artists you could see bison, wolves and even a wall that went for a walk



Segmented Sitka by Keith Rand; European Bison by Sally Matthews; The Wall That Went For A Walk by Andy Goldsworthy

pied flycatchers, falcons, hawks and an abundance of other wildlife. So when people are looking for the sculptures they can't help but take in and appreciate the environment around them," he says.

In the Forest of Dean, the impetus for a sculpture trail came from the desire to attract people deeper into the forest "so that they could enjoy its magic and mystery", says Martin Orrum, the chairman of the Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust.

The trail, he says, has a sense of the treasure hunt, which makes visitors look closer at the woods and the wildlife.

The 27,000-acre forest has sweet chestnut, ash, beech, conifers and a huge number of ancient oaks

among its millions of trees. It is also

home to buzzards, peregrine falcons, sparrowhawks, pied flycatchers, owls, foxes and fallow deer. The sculpture trail was opened in 1986 and at present has 12 pieces, though more will be added. It attracts 75,000 visitors a year.

"We felt that sculptures, more so than nature trails, were the best way

to interpret the special history and

wildlife of this place. Every piece,

therefore, has to relate to the

locality," Mr Orrum says.

Consequently, a work called *Iron*

Road by Ken Smith is composed of

20 old railway sleepers lying on the

bed of a disused railway track and

carved with images relating either

to the forest's industrial past (coal

and iron) or its abundant wildlife. There is also *Black Dome*, which is made of 900 charred larch stakes sunk into the ground. These reflect the ancient forest craft of making charcoal.

The Chiltern Sculpture Trail in the 70-acre Cowleaze Wood, west of High Wycombe and close to the M40, was started for a different reason: that of searching for alternative spaces to galleries where artists could site their work.

"If you ask some people if they want to visit an art gallery they'll just groan, but if you say come for a walk in the forest and see some sculptures they'll jump at it," says Sheena Etches, the director of the Chiltern Sculpture Trust.

A collection of 25 works is on display at Cowleaze, with two or three being replaced every year. About 50,000 people a year visit the trail. The sculptures, often using steel and synthetic fabrics, as well as wood and stone, are created specifically for their site but do not have to be made in the wood.

This differs from Grizedale, where all art works have to be made on site, using a high proportion of materials found locally. Three pieces by the internationally renowned artist Andy Goldsworthy — *Seven Spires*, *Sidewinder* and *The Wall That Went For A Walk* — are composed of little more than wood or stone.

The first two pieces, made more than ten years ago, were Mr Goldsworthy's first big projects after leaving college. He is now involved in a project in Cumbria using 100 sheepfolds as places for both permanent and ephemeral sculptures.

For his work at Grizedale, Shigeo Toya has taken a huge windfall tree, trimmed and cleaned its roots, cut off the trunk at 6ft, moved it to a different location in the forest and upended it, burying the stump in the earth. Rocks and smaller stones have been placed under the canopy of roots.

This may be one of the last sculptures Mr Goldsworthy organises before retirement. At 78, with an OBE for services to the environment and the arts, he is soon to step down. Although he was away for some years during the Second World War, it is 60 years since he first came to Grizedale as a student forester.

There is no doubt that he has left a dramatic legacy.

ON THE SPOT: SOUTHWEST GUERNSEY

The place: Pleinmont Point on the southwestern corner of Guernsey.

The view: Looking westwards you can make out the angry white tips of waves on a line of reefs called *Les Hanois* — the grave to many a ship and marked by the 1802 Hanois Lighthouse. To the north is Guernsey's largest bay, Rocquaine.

The appeal: My mother recalls watching the ocean roll and crash in the post-storm grumbles of a bright November morning: I was born that evening. It has a magical atmosphere, with fairy rings of toadstools, and I made wishes in them as a child.

Afficionados: Wish-makers, tourists to the ruined castle and locals looking for peace and views.

Historical interest: The ruined castle of Peveril stands in the shape of a star, on

headland. At the foot of the cliff is a circle of stones, which are thought to be of prehistoric origin and known as *Le Table des Pions* (the footmen's table).

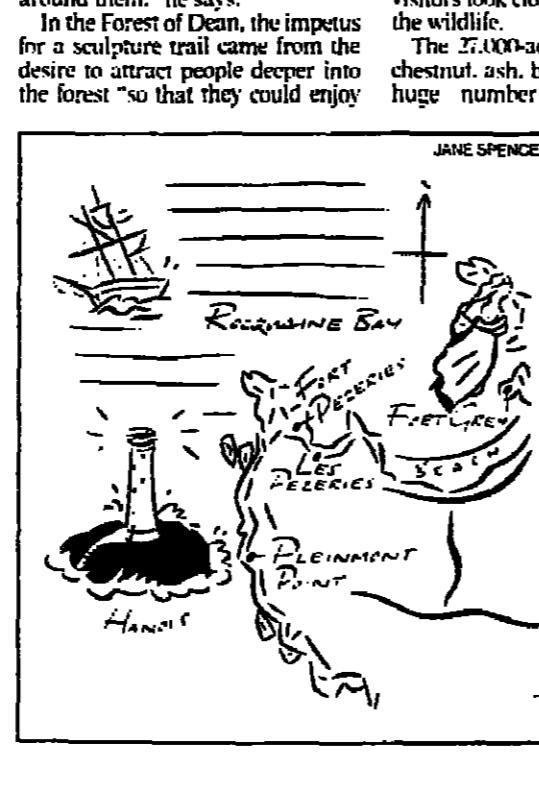
Time to visit: Seductive in mid-winter and at its bleakest. Best time is just after a storm when the waves are wild and the wind is blustery enough to blow away any cobwebs.

OS reference: There is no ordnance survey map of Guernsey, but Pleinmont Point can be found in the island's *Perry's Guide*.

How to get there: Fly from most UK airports, ferry from south coast ports.

Also nearby: Fun Grey in Rocquaine Bay, an early 18th-century coastal tower, now a maritime museum. But, being only 24 square miles, the whole island is nearby.

VICTORIA WALKER



Woodlarks circle the sky

The top spray of a young conifer will sometimes be permanently bent from a woodlark sitting on it.

For that reason it is restricted to the kind of heathland edge where the ground is scarred by fires or military manoeuvres, or the grass is nibbled by rabbits. Among the few places where it is found today are some of the West Country heaths, the Surrey-Hampshire border, and the Brecklands.

IT IS A BIRD I always love to come across, for its song above all, but also for its confounding ways. When you flush one from the ground in the breeding season, it goes up with a liquid trill note, then lands not far off on the ground or on a dead bush.

Here you can easily see the features that distinguish it from a skylark — the white eyestripe, the fine bill, and the short, square tail. The skylark is sturdier, and has a long tail with white edges.

The pair keep very close together in the nesting season, and except when the female is incubating, as soon as you spot one you generally see the other. Their nest is a well-woven cup made of moss and grass stalks, and hidden in a clump of heather, and the female lays three or four eggs spotted with rusty brown. Both parents look after their young — and these friendly birds have sometimes been observed feeding their nestlings side by side.

DERWENT MAY

• What's about: *Birders* — listed for garden warblers in woodlands. *Twitchers* — glossy thrush at Pilling, Lancashire; woodchat shrike at Reculver, Kent; black kite at Wimble, Oxfordshire. Details at *Wimble, 0901 702222*. Calls cost 40p a minute, cheap rate. 50p at all other times.

Haven on Ruskin's heavenly highway

Alex O'Connell takes the Barmouth road to a beguiling house in the Welsh hills

Ruskin once said that the road from Barmouth to Dolgellau in North Wales was so beautiful that it was surpassed only by the road from Dolgellau to Barmouth. Luckily there is no alternative route to Glyn Mawddach. The drive up to the steep hillside on the north of the Mawddach estuary, with views of the estuary and Cadair Idris to the southern side, simply took my breath away — like eating four extra strong mints at the same time. Surrounded by triskeling lambs, sun-dappled water and cornflower blue skies, I felt I had died and stepped into one of those soft-focus posters found on the walls of happy-clappy church halls.

Glyn Mawddach is an elegant Regency house reached by a sweeping gravel drive. It was owned, until his death in 1989, by Sir William Clayton Russon, who was instrumental in the wartime Dig For Victory campaign which encouraged people to grow their own vegetables, and whose love of gardening made him wish for a home with very particular grounds. He first viewed the house in 1943 and fell in love with it, but was almost pipped to the auction post by an MP. Luckily for Sir William, the MP was delayed by a late-night sitting at Westminster and an air raid, and arrived just as his rival signed the completion papers.

It is hard to imagine how anyone could not develop a serious crush on this location. The house does not perch on top of the hill but fits snug as a bug into a plateau cut into the hillside.

The house is spacious with five bedrooms, a self-contained flat and a sprinkling of outbuildings. Downstairs is a large drawing room with a marble hearth, plaster mouldings and the sort of view that I had previously thought existed only in *Cinemassope*. Next door, the Chinese Room, would look remarkably like the other rooms



The perfectly symmetrical pond garden is in a cool, leafy glade

but for its two elaborately-painted bird panels.

The conservatory, a 1950s add-on with polished stone floors, is reached from the dining room through French windows. Lined with jasmine and camellias, it is a highly successful suntrap.

Follow your nose to the back of the house and you find a large, sunny kitchen with quarry-tiled floors and laminated 1950s worktops that probably feature in

the erotic dreams of *Elle Decoration* subscribers.

The Welsh Parlour is cool and dark, and contains an impressive traditional stove complete with genuine iron pots and brass implements, and a huge payphone. I wondered why the two items of equipment shared this space, half expecting the telephone to ring with a request from *Challenge Anzekla*: "We need a dozen Welsh cakes in ten minutes."

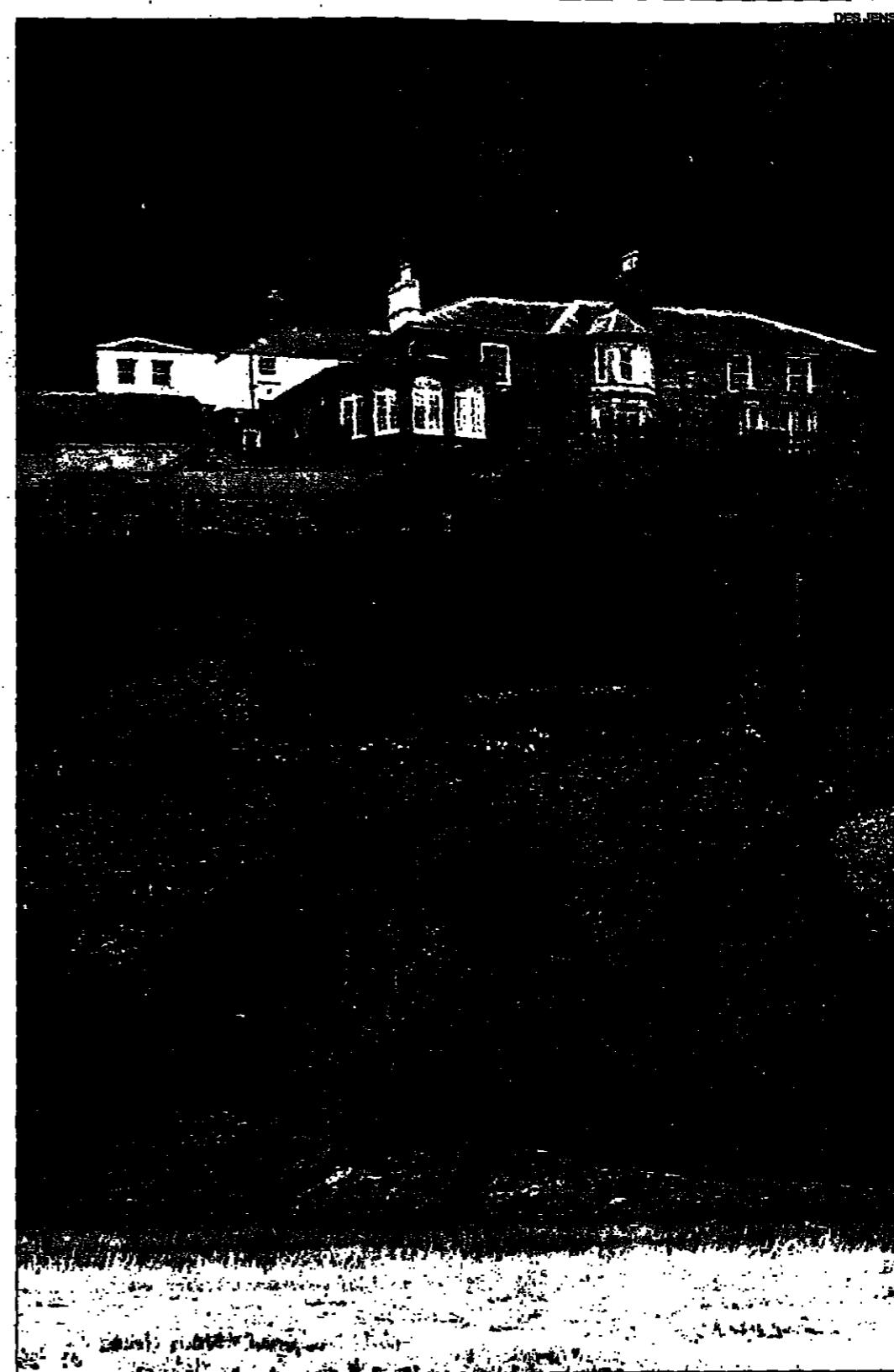
The gardens are diverse, original and well-kept, veined with steep-

HOUSE OF THE WEEK



Impressive wrought-iron gates

Glyn Mawddach, Mawddach Estuary, Snowdonia National Park, Wales. • Price: Offers in the region of £410,000. • Travel: Train to Machynlleth and Barmouth. Beautiful drive up to the house. • Shopping: Local produce in Barmouth and Dolgellau, cockles from the estuary, Chester and Shrewsbury for chain stores. • Entertainment: The George Hotel on the other side of the estuary is Egon Ronay recommended. Plenty of hill walking in the area. Chester and Shrewsbury for cinemas and theatre.



From its vantage point on a plateau, the house looks out across the Mawddach estuary

and winding mossy stone paths

which strain the calf muscles. The wrought-iron gates are guarded by two austere stone kestrels, marking the start of the azalea walk which leads to the fountain garden. The nearby topiary looks touched by the hand of Buddha: five trimmed bushes depict various stages of avian development, starting (naturally) with an egg and ending up with a fully fledged bird.

The gardens are diverse, original and well-kept, veined with steep- and winding mossy stone paths

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PROPERTY NEWS

THE Old Vicarage Cottage in Stoke by Nayland, Suffolk, which was painted by John Constable, is for sale. *Amanda Loose* writes: "The thatched roof of Constable's day has been replaced with slate, but the four-bedroom cottage is being sold part-leasehold for a term of 1,000 years from April 20, 1653, at a peppercorn rent. Offers in the region of £175,000. For information, contact Savills on 01473 226191."

PROPERTIES in Battersea and Putney, southwest London, are taking an average of two weeks to sell, according to

Jekyll, and the dovecote has a weathervane designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens which depicts Gertrude Jekyll as an angel. Guide price £15 million. Contact Browns on 01433 267070.

MORE buyers are looking for unusual properties, according to Guy Foster of Friend & Falcke in Clapham, south London. "Buyers have turned away from conventional properties and now want something different, such as huge windows or a galleried reception room. Such properties are selling quickly and at higher prices," he says.

HYDON RIDGE, near Hambledon in Surrey, is for sale. Built in 1911, the property has 6.75 acres of grounds which were originally designed by Gertrude

David Forbes of Chesterfield reckons 75 per cent of his customers stipulate that the property they buy must have parking.

Simon Ayrton of Friend & Falcke's Belgravia office agrees: "Off-street parking is often one of the top five must-haves for those looking to buy a substantial family house in Belgravia."

"We find many buyers at the top end of the market will consider spending an additional couple of hundred thousand pounds to acquire a mews house, just so they can have the use of its garage."

Parking is obviously at a premium in prime locations such as Kensington, Chelsea and Knightsbridge, says Lorna Vestey of Knight Frank — and anyone who has driven through Fulham will know there are too many multi-car flatsharers in the area.

But parking is also highly sought-after in areas where it is simply not safe to leave your car on the road, Ms Beaney says.

Parking is also a hot topic in many historic cities, especially Oxford, where the pressure is almost as great as in the capital, says Huw Warren of Cluttons. "A parking space can make a difference of between £10,000 and £15,000 on a £100,000 flat, and an extra £20,000 to £25,000 for a large town house with off-street parking."

Even in Lewes, East Sussex, parking spaces command a premium, with garages adding as much as 10 per cent to the value of a property, according to John Humberts office.

When they put it like that, forgoing a games room seems no hardship.

Amanda Loose

SELLING POINTS

PARKING

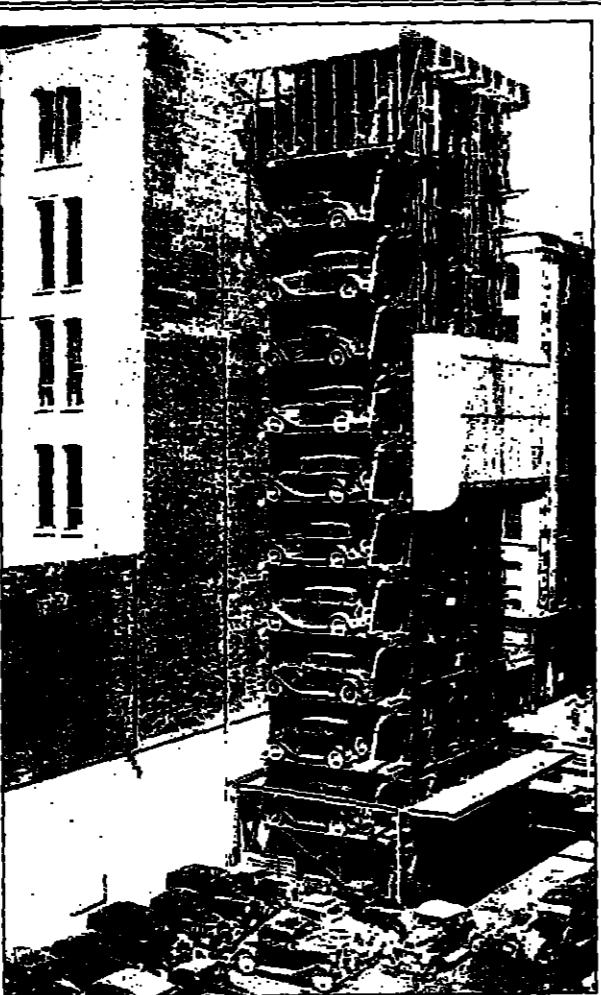
If you're ever tempted to turn your garage into an extra bedroom, games room or even a multi-covered mini-gym with sauna, think again. Parking space is highly sought-after by house-hunters, with many willing to pay well over the odds to keep their cars off the road — especially in the capital where, according to agents Beaney Pearce, some vehicles may be broken into or stolen twice in a year.

If you buy a house with a garage, keep the garage, says Julian Ash of Chesterton Residential. "Many new owners consider converting their garage into living space, thinking this will add to the value of the property. But they would be advised to retain the garage space which, in my view, has a much higher value than an extra bedroom," he says.

A garage can add a 50 per cent premium to the price of a prime central London house, says Ed Mead of Douglas & Gordon, with many garages going for more than a house in the provinces.

For the same price as an off-street space in prime central London, you could purchase a terraced house in Middlesbrough, according to the latest Land Registry figures. A garage in Chelsea can cost as much as a detached house in Pembrokeshire.

Indeed, Mayfair agents Wetherall have just sold seven car parking spaces off Grosvenor Square for £30,000 per space to a single buyer. Douglas & Gordon



Parking madness: in cities today, every space counts

sold a garage in Dilke Street, Chelsea, for £65,000 on a 29-year lease.

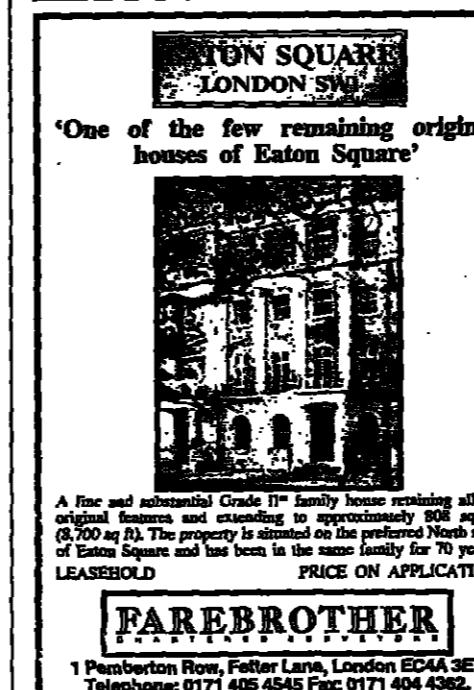
Just down the road, a buyer made an offer of more than £500,000 last month for a house with a double garage — over £100,000 more than the selling price of houses in the same area without a garage, say agents Aylesford.

There is nothing unusual about this, says Linda Beaney of Beaney Pearce, who recently had an inquiry from a resident of the Albert

Hall Studios in Kensington, west London, who wanted to buy another unmodernised flat in the same block, simply to get the two parking spaces that came with it.

Finding garages in central London is like looking for a needle in a haystack. For many Londoners, off-street parking is a prerequisite when house-hunting, the point that they will sacrifice space or the location to get their cars off the road," Ms Beaney says.

LONDON PROPERTY



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THE SUNDAY TIMES

FOR SALE**FOR ENTERTAINING**

LONDON: Eggin House, Hill Street, Mayfair, W1. Grade II listed building providing 16,700 sq ft of accommodation, including a grand staircase and four vast reception rooms opening onto a large west-facing garden and additional communal gardens. The property is currently made up of three office floors and four residential apartments. About £3 million for a 120-year lease (De Groot Colls, 0171-235 8090).



OXFORDSHIRE: The Pusey Estate, near Faringdon. Residential and agricultural estate in 1,585 acres, with a Grade II* listed Georgian house in classical gardens, parkland, farmland and woodland. Main house with 12 bedrooms, seven bathrooms, five reception rooms (including a 54ft by 20ft drawing room), domestic offices, staff flat, billiard room, snooker room and a swimming pool complex. Farmhouse, stabling and 14 cottages. About £8.5 million (Knight Frank, 0171-629 8171 and Strutt & Parker, 0171-629 7282).



TYNE AND WEAR: Southend House, Whitley Bay. Refurbished Victorian mansion house with a leisure suite, set in four acres of mature landscaped gardens. Nine bedrooms, five bathrooms (one en suite), four reception rooms, leisure suite with ballroom (43ft by 24ft 3in), snooker room, bar and swimming pool complex. Stable block and garaging. About £750,000 (Savills, 01904 620731).

CHERYL TAYLOR

Home comforts abroad

Holidays abroad can be expensive and hotel life is not exactly homely. So before you book your next break, why not consider swapping your house with someone looking for a holiday in Britain?

House-swapping can be particularly attractive if you own a second home but would like a change from going there every year.

The idea of holidaying by swapping your home for another somewhere else in the world sounds appealing, however, many people have reservations about the idea — after all, a home is a very valuable asset.

There are several home exchange programmes in Britain, all of which operate on varying scales. Those that are particularly thorough in their attention to detail and small enough to keep control over their operations include Worldwide Home Exchange, founded in 1982. From 25 members in its first year, it has grown to about 1,500 now, covering 35 countries.

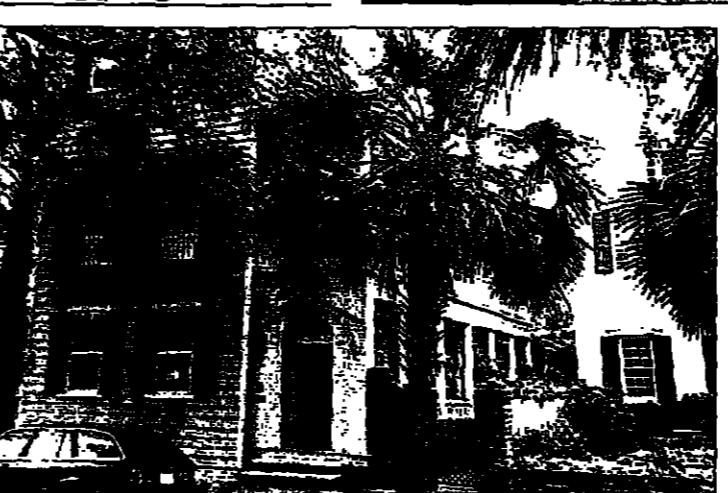
Two other small operations are Home Base Holidays, started in 1986 by Lois Sealy, and Intervac International, which was founded 40 years ago by the mother-in-law of the present owner, Rhona Nayar. Members pay an annual subscription which entitles them to a listing in the exchange directories, published three times a year. (Worldwide Home Exchange has two as a supplement, and Intervac a late-exchange service. Home Base has international linkages to other exchange clubs and programmes.)

Those who participate in home exchanges are mainly professional people, with or without children, and retired people. Homes vary but Ms Nayar says, "You don't have to have a luxurious house to take part in a swap. The main thing is that it is warm and inviting."

Properties range from flats and condominiums to houses, mansions and estates, and people do not always want to swap like for like. One man swapped a large estate in Barbados for a one-bedroom apartment in Colorado. All he wanted was to ski.

Lecturers Paul and Judith Stafford, of Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, have swapped their home three times

Hotel bills are a thing of the past for many families who choose to enjoy holidays worldwide by swapping houses



with families in America through Home Base. Mrs Stafford says: "The first time we had a two-bedroom flat in Walthamstow, northeast London, which we swapped for a holiday home in Massachusetts near a lake, complete with canoe. We had a Fiat 127; the people we swapped with had a Space Cruiser."

The nature of the Staffords' work means that they can take long holidays, but with two children they would find hotel bills over five or six weeks prohibitive.

"If you are saddled with a mortgage, you might as well turn it into an asset and use it as a means to travel," Mrs Stafford says. "We might not bother with all the organisation involved if it was only for a two-week holiday, but for a longer time it is well worth it."

"Since we have had the children we



Paul and Judith Stafford, above, with their children Florence and Joseph. Left, the house in Charleston, South Carolina, for which they swapped their home in Kingston, Surrey

much shorter. The best strategy is to comb through a home-swap directory and start making contact with owners of homes in locations you are interested in. When listing your holiday location preferences, say the programme organisers, it is best to be flexible and open to suggestions. For example, if you are looking at America and someone from South Africa contacts you, always consider the possibility.

Another recommendation is for exchangers to meet, if possible, and many long-standing friendships have developed from this. Generally, home exchangers work hard to make visitors welcome. On their return, one English couple even threw a party for their American exchangers and invited everyone who had met them during their stay, including the postman and the milkman.

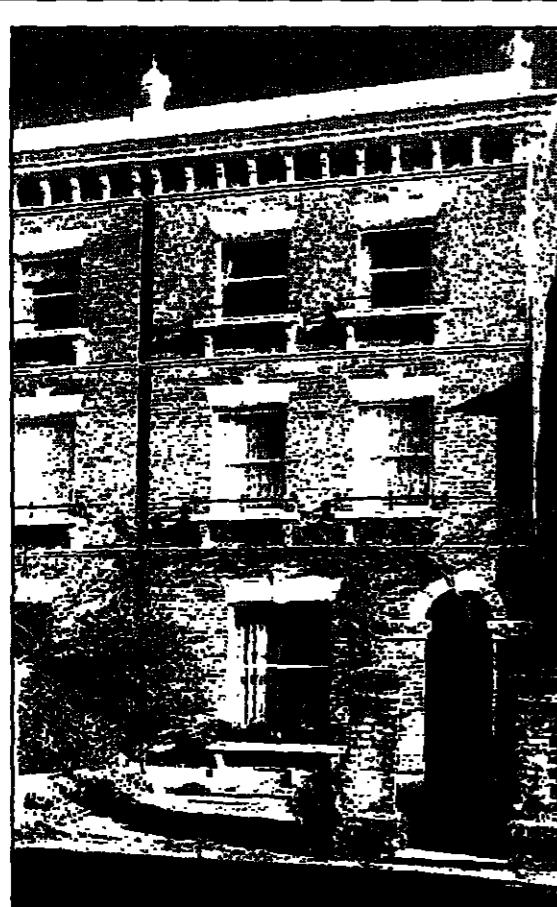
KERRYN BROOKER

FACT FILE

■ Worldwide Home Exchange Club (Milly Baer), 50 Hans Crescent, London SW1X 0NA (0171-823 9937); annual subscription £29.

■ Home Base Holidays (Lois Sealy), 7 Park Avenue, London N13 5PG (0181-886 8752, fax 0181-482 4288; e-mail 100522.273@compuserve.com); subscription varies up to £75.

■ Intervac International (Rhona Nayar), 3 Orchard Court, North Wraxall, near Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 7AD (01225 892208, fax 01225 892011; e-mail intervac.gb@msn.com); subscription £65.

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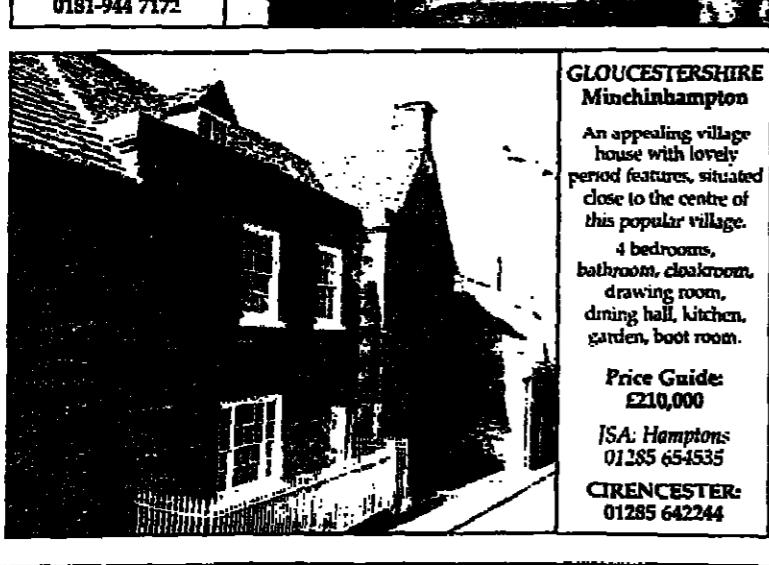
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TIMES CLASSIFIED MEANS SATISFIED

'At what point, I wonder, do boisterous boys and girlsterous girls turn into self-important men and self-effacing women?'

Women are natural-born storytellers, I thought, as I listened to eight high-flying females tell their audience at a seminar how they had managed to survive in their careers for so long. Refreshingly, they revealed that they had often been guided by instinct when making important decisions, following the urgent promptings of their hearts as much as the cool reasoning of their heads.

Sometimes this meant they arrived in the same place as their more overtly ambitious male colleagues, despite the circuitous journey. Sometimes this meant they had willingly sacrificed the top jobs or made a virtue out of a redundancy in order to have a more complete and satisfying life.

But most striking was the way in which the women portrayed themselves as the fall-gal in their own stories — the jolly matron, Queen Bee of the music press surrounded by her cadaverous boy journalists; the flamboyant sex goddess, buffeted here and there by life's vicissitudes but by God (this said through gritted teeth) — an Oscar-winning perfor-

She won't blow her own trumpet

mance) she's still standing. Perhaps it was a distancing device, a way to pretend to themselves that they were not really talking about themselves. We all know what bad form it is for women to blow their own trumpets — and nowhere more so than in Britain.

Their professional stories were studed with details of personal loss and feelings of insecurity: the miscarriages and times of despair, waking up in the morning believing you will never be able to pick yourself up again. The intimacy of such private feelings was all the more poignant for it being shared by such public women. They seemed to see it as part of the deal to hold a mirror to the imperfections of what might appear on the outside to be their inexorable rise, to a room full of younger and less experienced women.

And there was a complete lack of pomposity. Almost without exception,

the women would refer to some aspect of high-powered executive life that they had rejected in favour of the bigger picture — the directorial suite, the chauffeur-driven limo — and then look incredibly embarrassed that they had been crass enough to mention such turkeys. I could not help thinking that if it had been a panel of men, not only would there have been no trace of bashfulness but we would have been left in no doubt whatsoever about the magnitude of the sacrifice. You can be sure we think that. My belief is that in life, people will take you very much at your own reckoning. But at what point, I wonder, do boisterous boys and girlsterous girls turn into self-important men and self-effacing women?

LIFE AND SOUL



GINNY DOUGRAY

to the exact make and make-up of the company car: "It was, as it happens, a BMW Series 7, 36 valve, twin carb, fuel-injection, limited edition convertible with state-of-the-art seat warmers."

Trollope offered the following advice: "Above all things, never think that you're not good enough yourself. A man should never think that. My belief is that in life, people will take you very much at your own reckoning. But at what point, I wonder, do boisterous boys and girlsterous girls turn into self-important men and self-effacing women?"

who refers to "my staff" when she is talking about her nanny and her cleaner.

There is no excuse for our generation of mothers, one might think, to bring up our sons to be anything other than perfectly well-balanced model New Men. But I wonder whether our child-centred culture might be in danger of creating — irony of ironies — more monstrously egotistical men than all the previous generations put together. No one who has read Kate Saunders's searing account of her young son's despotic hold on her household can doubt that even the most feisty feminists may find themselves defenceless against all that nascent testosterone.

Our own sons often seem to rule our roost. Car journeys sound like junior Question Time, as each of them tries to drown out a perceived opponent. "Absolute silence," the older one thunders, "listened to me, everybody."

"Oh shhhuddup, you... nostril," his younger brother retorts. "I'm the one who's talking." It's a good thing we don't have a daughter — she would not get a word in edgeways. So much for equality.

Meet my friend, the mother-in-law

Take a fat harridan with a shrill voice, a silly hat with cherries, and 1950s National Health specs with go-fast wings like Mrs Merton's, and you have every tired stand-up comedian's version of The Mother-in-Law. She must be the oldest cliché in the book. While the trio of words — mother-in-law — can, surely, no longer raise even the most downtrodden smile, it does still manage to prompt in most of us a negative image. This is because she has been the butt of jokes, if very lame ones, for so long that she has become part of our collective psyche.

But does the bossy, possessive, interfering witch of popular lore actually exist?

"I don't think the caricature is true any longer, nor since the early Eighties," says Julia Cole, a counsellor and therapist for Relate and author of *Crunch Points for Couples*. "The jokes had their roots in something serious and profound which still exists: how we separate from the family we grew up in, move on, create one of our own and accept new loyalties. A man had to worry about an overbearing mother-in-law, and a woman about a man who had trouble leaving his mother. I occasionally still get women saying their husbands complain that they don't iron their shirts as well as their mother used to."

"But things have changed since the 1950s and 1960s. The woman is no longer a changeling passed from her family to her husband. In the past, parents gave her away like a gift and so still believed they had some influence on how that gift was treated. Now a woman is more likely to have a career and an equal partner-share. She has greater confidence and self-esteem, so is less likely to be cowed by her mother-in-law. Also, the increase in co-habitation — by 2000, 50 per cent of couples won't be married — means that the in-law role is more blurred."

Felicity Binyon, 58, whose eldest daughter, Miranda, married Harry Cory-Wright, a photographer, in 1995, has an enviable relationship with her son-in-law. "I've never felt like a music-hall mother-in-

With some exceptions, the old stereotype is being consigned to the dustbin, says Candida Crewe

law," she says. "With my generation, meeting the future mother-in-law was like meeting the matriarch. But the whole structure of the family has changed. Now the prospective son or daughter-in-law isn't like a newcomer arriving into the family, someone who must be scrutinised and considered. All the old things of class and money no longer exist — not from my point of view, anyway. Also, my children's generation is much more liberated, they tend to think of us more as friends. I feel Harry [who is 33] treats me like an equal. Other than showing he loves your daughter, it's the nicest compliment a son-in-law can pay you."

Felicity, who has been married twice, has five grown-up daughters and lives in Oxford. She sees Harry and Miranda about once a month, and relishes her visits to the house where they live on the Norfolk coast. "Harry and I both think Norfolk is the best place ever and we share quite a lot of artistic enjoyment. I love his work and admire his sharing of looking after the baby. He's very tactful and conscious of how I might be feeling. If there's ever any tension between Miranda and I, he would think it was our business and allow us to deal with it in our own way. He's never interfered in my relationship with her in any way."

The Cory-Wrights' son, Josey, was born 15 months ago. Although Felicity feels there has been no separation from Harry since the baby was born, she does acknowledge that there has been a slight change in the relationship with him, and the roles have become more obvious.

"Whereas during the courtship and the wedding you're a friend," she says, "when the

baby comes along you're needed. Harry's and my shared concern for Miranda and affection for Josey has deepened the bond between us, but it's become more obvious that we are two generations. As a grandmother as well as mother-in-law you have to curb all controlling instincts and realise that if you're needed you will be there, but you don't interfere. My first mother-in-law, wonderful though she was, used to send me little notes about how to do things. I wouldn't dream of doing that."

HARRY CORY-WRIGHT WITH SON JOSEY AND MOTHER-IN-LAW FELICITY BINYON

Felicity clearly appreciates Felicity's tact. He thinks she is the perfect mother-in-law and that their relationship is excellent. "Miranda and I were quite grown-up when we married," he says. "We were in our thirties, not teenagers. Felicity's not the classic disapproving mother-in-law, there's no hype about going to visit granny, none of that having to be on one's best behaviour. I love her youth of mind, and never feel shy of talking about anything with her. Also, she's not living close by, which is a shame but it does perhaps explain why there's never been any problem with the potential in-law factor of interfering."

The same could not be said of Lily Trotter, 30, who lives in Somerset in the same street as her mother-in-law, Lily's husband, David, is a builder and they have a son, Tom, and she has had her moments of experiencing the traditional mother-in-law from hell. "When I first met Joan," says Lily, "she was warm, homely, easy-going, but that was before I was David's girlfriend. Then she was cold and unfriendly, and talked to David as if I wasn't there. She never asked me a single question and revealed a fearsome temper. Once at lunch she cut me

out mid-sentence by starting to clear the plates away. She's an old-fashioned woman and was not going to accept me as her son's live-in girlfriend. One time, she stormed into our house when David was out and ripped down the curtains, saying they weren't good enough."

This sort of behaviour was normal until after Lily and David got married five years ago and Tom was born. Then things began slowly to change for the better and Joan became much more like the woman Lily had originally met.

"I realise now," Lily says, "that what I sometimes took to be real rudeness was another generation not wanting to intrude its respect of boundaries. Joan's got a brusque manner but she's a good person underneath, funny and easy-going. Partly why we get on better now is because I've decided not to be intimidated. If she tries to stuff Tom with food, I tell her when he doesn't want it. If she asks how I know he's not hungry, I say because he's my son."

"These days she hasn't time to be a busybody. I can even say it's nice having her so near. I enjoy visiting her, we have good bonding sessions and moans about David. I like the mix of generations, so long as she respects our privacy. She no longer storms in unannounced. That all stopped the moment we got married."

"I think she believes her responsibility for David has deferred to his wife. It took some doing, but at last she's hardened him over."

Harry Cory-Wright and Lily Trotter are not freaks for liking their mothers-in-law. These days it is quite normal for people to regard them as confidantes and friends. The mother-in-law of today is a woman who was young in the 1960s and 1970s and probably had her fair share of fun in her time. She is a less upright creature than her vaudeville counterpart, and determined not to repeat the pattern of mistakes made by her own intrusive mother-in-law.

The experiences of Felicity and Harry do prove that an

excellent in-law relationship is possible. So isn't it time the stereotypical mother-in-law was consigned to the familial skip? Surely, for the next millennium, comedians will have to hit upon a new butt for their jokes.

Harry Cory-Wright with son Josey and mother-in-law Felicity Binyon: "It's great because I can talk to her about anything"

Ruth Gledhill joins a small but determined group of worshippers in Norfolk

Warm welcome in a cold climate

OUTSIDE it was warm and sunny, but inside my bones froze in the icy air that infiltrated every pore. The smell was of damp and stale seawater. I wondered if the sepulchral chill was a manifestation of the ghost of a pre-Reformation Prior said to haunt the church. The reality was more prosaic. The Rector has decided it would be "immoral" to burn up the amount of fuel that would be required to warm the tiny congregation in what is said to be the largest parish church in England.

Wised-up members come to church in thermal underwear and woolly stockings. Quartz ray heaters glowed like sunlamps above the choir stalls, where most of the congregation sat, next to the choir. The tops of their heads roared but their bottom halves, protected by the pews, froze. Those of us who arrived too late to sit in the choir simply froze all over.

While we ran through an enlivened ASB, the Rector, Canon Michael Woods, who has a team of five paid and unpaid staff running six churches in and around Great Yarmouth, was censuring the altar across the river at St Mary's. Later that night, at another of his churches, hands would be raised, guitars played and Graham Kendrick worship songs sung. "The churches in the parish range from the tambourine to the thrumble," the rector explained. "Every member of the team can operate throughout that spectrum."

"Our service was taken by his curate, the Rev Gill Jessop, a bounc-



Altar girls at St Nicholas Church

ing, beaming late ordinand and clearly at the evangelical end of that spectrum. She had just returned from Spring Harvest, an evangelical Christian festival at a Baulins holiday camp. "There was something special about being with 9,000 other Christians," she said, addressing her congregation of 50 as though we were thousands. The difficulty came on her return. The doubts set in. "Did I really meet Jesus or was it my imagination?"

She related this to the gospel reading of the day, referring to Christ's post-Resurrection appearances to the disciples. "There is no point in hiding your light under a bushel, or covering it with a bucket, depending on which version you are reading," she said. "You must go out

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TEAM RECTOR: Canon Michael Woods

ARCHITECTURE: Mostly Gothic. East window resembles Donald Duck. ★★★

SERMON: Valiant, refusing to give in to doubt. ★★★★

MUSIC: Traditional hymns with choir accompanied by wonderful organ. ★★★★

LITURGY: ASB Rite A. ★★

SPIRITUAL HIGH: Chilli offset by the warmth of the congregation. ★★★

AFTER-SERVICE CARE: We warmed up in the nearest Little Chef.

into the world and let people see the light by living the life of the Lord. Have no doubt that it is real."

St Nicholas was founded in 1101 by Herbert de Losigna, first Bishop of Norwich, and was repeatedly enlarged and extended until, by the middle of the 13th century, the aisles were widened to 30ft, and remain to this day the widest side aisles of any Christian church in the world. Sadly, the population of 10,000 the church was intended to serve was reduced to 3,000 by the Black Death. After the Reformation, the refectory became a stable. The church under Cromwell was divided into three, for the Puritans and Independents, with the Church of England in the nave. Restored magnificently by the Victorians, it was gutted by bombs in 1942.

The Priory and Parish Church of St Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR30 4EE. Tel: 01493 850066

In 1961 the present rector, Canon Woods, grandson of the great Norfolk boat builder Walter Woods, served as the crucifer who led the procession into the church for its consecration after restoration. Imagine his dismay five years ago when he returned as rector to find it surrounded by water. Rumour has it that a cement mixer had fallen into a drain and was concreted over, raising the high water table even higher. Hence the smell of damp, competing with that of polish applied by the army of volunteers.

Canon Woods will lead the congregation tomorrow in Arzack day celebrations, with didgeridoo and Australian dance, as the replica of Captain Cook's HMS Endeavour rests in the harbour. The rector has fought a valiant battle to resurrect the church, and there is no doubt that the tide of despond is receding. Line dancing with Rowena's Dance Ranch has been introduced, and the nave will host soon a dog show to find the dog with the waggiest tail, and the one most like its owner.

Less valiant souls would despair to be given the curse of St Nicholas, beached on the edge of England like some battle-scarred ship of the past. Not so Canon Woods. A cleric who describes with glee his regular Sunday forays onto the Norfolk Broads in his grandfather's oak and mahogany boat to take on the "Tupperware Navy that herds up and down in its plastic boats" is just the man to salvage this church for the present, while not destroying its past.

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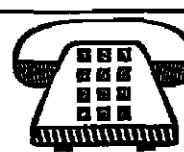
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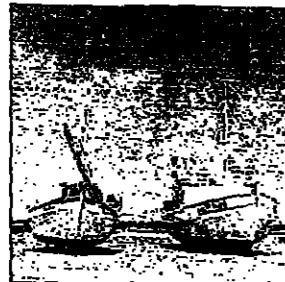
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from the
slow lane
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IMAGE BANK

Chile: Built last century to recreate the Gallic capital, Santiago is a world away from ponchos and pan-pipes

The Paris that is handy for the Andes

The clocks strike ten and the men in the high black boots click their heels. From far down a side street, brassy march music reaches towards the waiting crowd. An officer twirling a mace leads his military band across the square. The euphoniums blast out *Colonel Bogey*. They're changing the guard at the Moneda Palace in Santiago.

The palace – pillared, presidential, 19th century – is a testament to Chile's recent history. Its long front wall is scarred by patched-up pock-marks inflicted by shells and bombs when General Pinochet staged his military coup in 1973. President Salvador Allende made his last stand inside – wearing a tin helmet and defending himself with a machine gun presented by Fidel Castro. "Long live Chile!" he cried in his last radio broadcast. "Long live the people! Long live the workers!"

But Pinochet took over and for 16 years Chile was effectively wiped off the world tourism map. "Do you remember the days when it wasn't politically correct to buy Chilean onions?" asks a bearded Briton as bayonets are fixed and swords sheathed.

Now, since the 1989 democratic elections, Chile is welcoming western tourists again and onions are back on the menu. The old advice "Don't get caught in cross-fire" no longer applies. The instant image is ponchos and pan pipes – and there are plenty of those in the rural areas of this trailing ribbon of a country that the Andes have almost edged into the ocean.

But there's another Chile. And Santiago is a good place to sample it. Leave *Colonel Bogey* and stroll across to the square in front of the cathedral. In late afternoon, between siesta and fiesta, old men in sombreros are feeding pigeons and street photographers with cameras as big as ovens are touting for custom.

In the warm autumn sunlight, poplar trees shed yellow leaves and pavement artists are tactfully slimming down chubby children. A woman in a white coat checks business men's blood pressure.

There's a lot of strolling and sitting on benches and playing chess and listening to a man with a beard full enough to grow mushrooms. He is shouting Protestant sermons in front of the Catholic cathedral, where the confession boxes have neat lace curtains and Moses' finger points to the commandment about adultery.

Take the passageway a few yards along and cross cobbled courtyards full of melon trees and wooden statues of Christ as a Spanish fisherman. In the relics corner is a dimly-lit glass case packed with saints' leg bones. St Clement's tibia, St Vincent's fibula, St



FACT FILE

■ British Airways (0345 222111) flies direct from London to Santiago three times a week. Prices start from £1,091 return. Flights booked through Journey Latin America (0181-747 8315) start £655 with BA, excluding taxes.

■ JLA offers a Santiago package, with six nights at the Hyatt Regency and return flights with BA from £994 per person sharing a twin room. It includes breakfasts and transfers, a city tour and tours of Valparaiso and Vina del Mar.

■ The best time to visit is September to May, with December to March the warmest months. June to August are the best months for seeing wildlife.

■ UK passport holders do not need visas. No vaccinations are required, but it is recommended that typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis A be obtained if travelling in rural areas.

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-225 2601) recommends *Chile Handbook*, Charlie Nurse (Footprint, £10.99), *Travels in a Thin Country*, Sara Wheeler (Abacus, £7.99), *The House of Spirits*, Isabel Allende (Black Swan, £6.99).

Jucundi's something – can't tell what, but he must have limped badly. There are plenty of saints' legs because there are plenty of saints – St Edith, St Nelson, St Aida, even St Sandra, bless her.

With its parks and gardens, its wide boulevards, its street cafés and its central river, Santiago could just about pass as Paris – which is exactly what the people who built it last century wanted. They commissioned Eiffel, of Tower fame, to design grand public buildings and a railway station now used – like the Musée d'Orsay – as an exhibition centre. They stuffed the ships from France with crystal chandeliers and gold leaf. They wanted to recreate a little bit of Europe in the Andes.

As Hugo, our guide, says: "Here in Chile, we are very far from the rest of the world." From the 16th century, the Spanish conquerors suppressed the native Indian cul-

dine-bomb fish. And a couple of hundred miles beyond the glistening horizon is the island where the original Robinson Crusoe was shipwrecked. And not a poncho or a pan pipe in sight.

Valparaiso is the Marseilles of Chile, bohemian and rather scruffy in the way ports can be – too busy to bother with the peeling paintwork. Steep cobbled streets, twisting flights of steps and funicular railways surround a central square lined with palm trees and magnolias.

The city was a great British centre last century. Hence the Queen Victoria Hotel, the Avenue Grand Bretagne and the graves on the highest hill in the cemetery for "Los Dissidentes". Study the memorial to the wondrously named Lushington Goodwin and have a drink in one of the British bars where local groups imitate the Beatles.

Around the bay is Vina del Mar, more Monaco than Marseilles. It's an ever-expanding beach resort popular with Santiago weekenders and full of luxury apartment blocks. It has horse-drawn broughams, a restaurant that plays *Don't Cry for Me Argentina* and a football team called Everton (sharing a ground with Santiago Wanderers).

Couples canoodle on the beach. The Pacific waves break spectacularly. Gulls

ture and developed a cosmopolitan outlook. Hugo's grandparents were Spanish, Italian, French and German – but he says Chileans are called the British of South America. Reserved, polite, sober, Fiestas can be a touch formal.

For British, now read American. Santiago happily embraces the Colonisation of the globe. The young wear baseball caps, back to front, and blow bubblegum. The shopping malls are stacked with Barbies and "mini-blenders – just like mums'". And, despite one of the world's most efficient Metro systems, there are cars everywhere. High mountains surround the city and glow a stunning pink at sunset. But they trap pollution. A plan to encourage through-winds by chopping off their top 1,000 feet was abandoned. Car use is now rota-rationed. "There is so much rush," says Hugo. "There are as many taxis here as in New York."

Even so, first-time visitors are more likely to be struck by the city's clean, green elegance. It has style and charm and, in El Naturista, one of the best vegetarian restaurants in a country where non-meat-eaters are indulged as halfwits. Meat and fish are piled high at every meal.

You can watch the fish being landed at Valparaiso, Chile's second city – 80 miles north of Santiago past 47 Coca-Cola hoardings and countless roadside shrines to accident victims. Pelicans swoop, their beaks snapping like tailors' shears, as the fishermen land swordfish and sea bass from bright yellow boats for gutting on the shore.

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Couples canoodle on the beach. The Pacific waves break spectacularly. Gulls



In Santiago during the late afternoon, between siesta and fiesta, there is a lot of sitting on benches, playing chess or strolling through leafy squares

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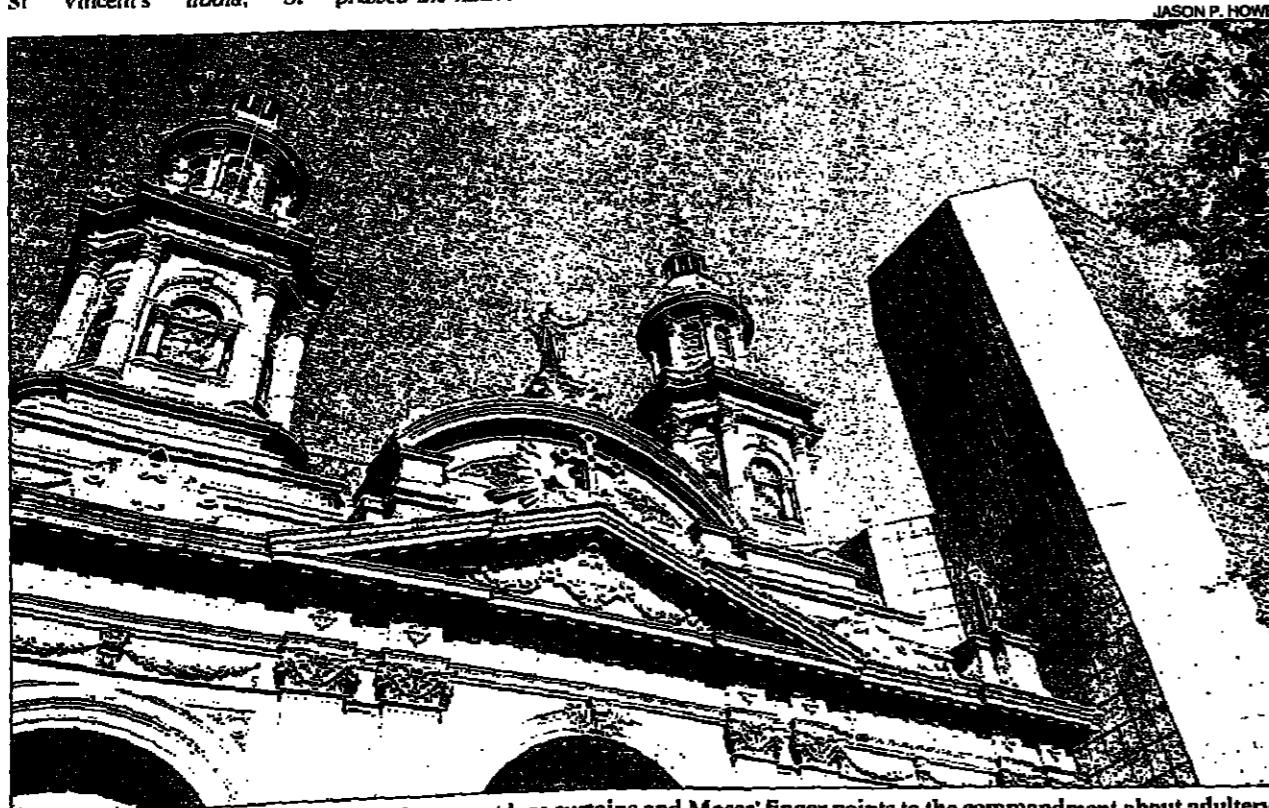
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In the cathedral the confession boxes have neat lace curtains and Moses' finger points to the commandment about adultery

Spring breaks: The literary landscape of Marcel Proust; plus the artistic life and soul of the Spanish border

A novel type of pilgrim

Few novelists enjoy as much of a cult following as Marcel Proust (1871-1922). Reading the seven volumes of Proust's magnum opus, *Remembrance of Things Past*, is frequently described as an eye-opening, even life-changing experience. For anyone who has fallen seriously under Proust's spell, there may be no finer way to spend a holiday than to undertake a Proustian pilgrimage, visiting a number of sites in northern France connected with the great moustachioed writer.

What would such a pilgrimage involve? First and foremost, a visit to Illiers-Combray, a sleepy town 25 kilometres southwest of the cathedral town of Chartres. For centuries, the place was simply known as Illiers, but in 1971, it decided to rename itself to signal its connection to its most famous son, or rather visitor, for it was here that Marcel Proust spent his summer holidays in his great aunt's house and here that he drew inspiration for the fictional town of Combray, lovingly described in the first volume of his novel.

There is something eerie about driving into a place which has surrendered its claim to independent reality in favour of a role fashioned for it by a novelist who spent a few summers there as a boy in the late 19th century. But Illiers-Combray relishes the idea. Every bakery advertises '*la petite madeleine de Marcel Proust*', and groups of pilgrims are to be seen ambling down the town's quaint cobbled streets, carrying bags of madeleines and heading for Proust's aunt's house, now converted into the Musée Marcel Proust.

It has all the kitsch touches usually found in writer's museums — pens which the author supposedly wrote with, desks where he supposedly sat, beds he supposedly slept in. Characters in the novel are referred to as if they were real, rather than merely modelled on real people. Visitors are solemnly shown "the bed in which Aunt Seznac slept" and "the kitchen where Françoise cooked her asparagus". Still, those who have been impressed by the opening pages of Proust's novel cannot fail to be moved by the sight of the small garden in which the author's fictionalised mother once sat with Charles Swann before going upstairs to give her son the legendary good night kiss.

In the countryside around Illiers-Combray, Marcel Proust trails have been set up so that tourists can follow *on foot* the very country walks the author takes his readers along on the page. You can watch the time flow languidly past, and recall its fictionalised version.



Illiers-Combray, where Proust, left, spent summer holidays in his great aunt's house and drew inspiration for the fictional town of Combray portrayed in his novel

■ The author flew Brit Air (0181-742-6600) from Gatwick to Le Havre, return flights from £89.

■ Musée Marcel Proust, 4 Rue du Docteur Proust, 28120 Illiers-Combray, Eure-et-Loir (02) 37 72 43 097. Visits daily, except Monday. Entrance Fr25 (£2.70).

■ Chambre Marcel Proust, Banque SNVB, 102 Boulevard Haussmann, 75009 Paris.

■ Musée Carnavalet, 23 Rue de Sevigne, 75003 Paris. Open every day except Monday.

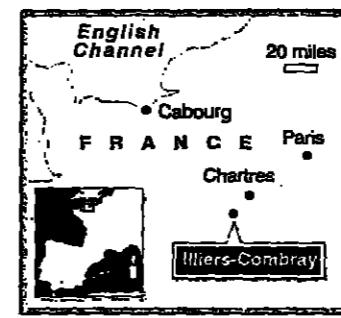
■ Hotel Ritz, 15 Place Vendôme, 75001 Paris (43 16 30 30). Proust suite Fr6,900 (£770) low season, Fr8,700 (£970) high season.

FACT FILE

■ Grand Hotel, Promenade Marcel Proust, Cabourg (02 31 91 01 79, fax 02 31 24 03 20). Proust suite: Fr1,200 low season, Fr1,300 high season.

■ Hertz cars can be rented in eight Normandy towns. Reservations can be made in the UK by phoning 0990 906090. A week's car hire from Deauville in May costs from about £144.

■ Reading: *Remembrance of Things Past*, by Marcel Proust (Penguin, three volumes, £12, £12.50, £13). *Companion Guide to Normandy*, by Nesta Roberts (Boydell & Brewer, £14.95). *Normandy and Brittany* (Rough Guide, 8.99).



large sunken bath. Hints of Proust are everywhere in Cabourg: there's a promenade Marcel Proust, the Grand Hotel has a restaurant called Le Balbec, the bar in the casino is called Du côté de chez Swann and there's even a café called the Albertine.

Proustians would be well advised to take a car beyond Cabourg into the surrounding Normandy countryside, dotted — as in Dives, Glanville, Bricqueville and Englesqueville — with quaint medieval churches. Proust had a passion for these, and would visit them at night, asking his chauffeur to light up the archways and the gargoyle with the car headlamps.

Despite his many ailments and reclusive tendencies, there was nothing Marcel Proust loved to do more than go on holiday. He provides us with the perfect excuse to head off on one — though we should perhaps heed his warning: "The finest holidays are those we picture to ourselves in our minds before we have left home."

ALAIN DE BOTTON

The author was assisted by French Tourist Office. He is the author of *How Proust Can Change Your Life*, published by Picador, £12.99.

Knowing art from anchovies

We headed for Catalan country in search of spring. Picking up a car from Toulouse airport, we drove on to where the Pyrenees tumble into the Mediterranean. Known to sailors as the armistice of the Med, the locals understandably prefer the name of Côte Vermouille, presumably referring to the reddish brown earth.

Once a small fishing port, Collioure has drawn artists to its narrow streets since the days of Matisse and Derain. Picasso passed through. Dufy doodled and even Charles Rennie Mackintosh stayed long enough to take off his coat.

Today, the art is reassuring rather than radical, and fishing has to compete with fashion. But, despite an appetite for the tourist franc, Collioure has retained a great deal of its inherent beauty. Salmon-pink

houses under orange-brown tiles crowd around the water's edge. St Vincent's church, grafted on to the lighthouse in the 17th century, guards the north wall of the harbour and the Château Royal, founded by the Templars in the 12th century, dominates the bay.

Climbing steeply back from the harbour, the houses begin to thin out among delicately terraced fields of vines until the hills eventually become too steep to cultivate and serve simply as a spectacular backdrop to the town.

Our hotel, Les Templiers, has long been a focus for the town's artistic life. René Pous, the founder, had clearly had a soft spot for Matisse and his cohorts and could always be persuaded to part with a plate of anchovies and a bottle of red wine in exchange for a painting. As a result, the walls are filled with what one would term "works of art". Good business if you are feeding a hungry Matisse but in some cases René got a bad deal.

Collioure is only a few miles from the Spanish border. Unlike the British, who have strong ideas about national boundaries, the Catalans admit there is no other reason for visiting the town and I assume that the enormous golden-yellow eggs on the roof reflect the artist's status in the town as the fabled goose.

Back in France, we drove inland along the River Tech, one of several Catalan rivers that flow from the Pyrenees on to the Roussillon plain. Amélie. She then explained how we might take the track up through the pass and on towards Mont Canigou, a mountain that occupies a special place in the Catalan soul.

The River Aude also spills out of the Pyrenees and the valley provides a spectacular drive. In the Défilé de Pierre-Lys, a gorge south of Quillan, the road passes under huge

much of the present building dates from the 15th century. Inside, the impression is of size — its Gothic nave is the widest of its kind in the world, and you cannot help wondering how the roof stays up.

The greatest treasures, however, are to be found in the museum and cloisters. Religious or not, there is something awe-inspiring about the *Beatus*, an account of the Apocalypse written more than 1,000 years ago by Emeterius, and the Romanesque *Tapestry of the Creation*, woven in the 11th and 12th centuries and still largely intact.

In a long room above the cloisters is a collection of bishops' vestments dating back to the 13th century. The vestments are displayed on dummies inside glass cabinets. Each one reflects off the windows of surrounding cabinets, thus multiplying the number of "bishops". I felt as if I had stumbled into an episcopal cocktail party.

Collioure is only a few miles from the Spanish border. Unlike the British, who have strong ideas about national boundaries, the Catalans admit there is no other reason for visiting the town and I assume that the enormous golden-yellow eggs on the roof reflect the artist's status in the town as the fabled goose.

From the outside Gerona's cathedral is not particularly impressive, but don't be put off. It was founded in the 11th century, though a Roman temple and a mosque previously occupied the site, and

walking holiday that gained its 15 minutes of fame when the inhabitants murdered Louis XIV's taxmen. A roadside sign at the Hôtel des Touristes proclaimed: "We attempt to correctly speak English, and the maîtresse d', a formidable Catalan lady, did indeed engage us in conversation.

She congratulated us on driving so far up the valley and berated the folk of Perpignan for never getting past Amélie. She then explained how we might take the track up through the pass and on towards Mont Canigou, a mountain that occupies a special place in the Catalan soul.

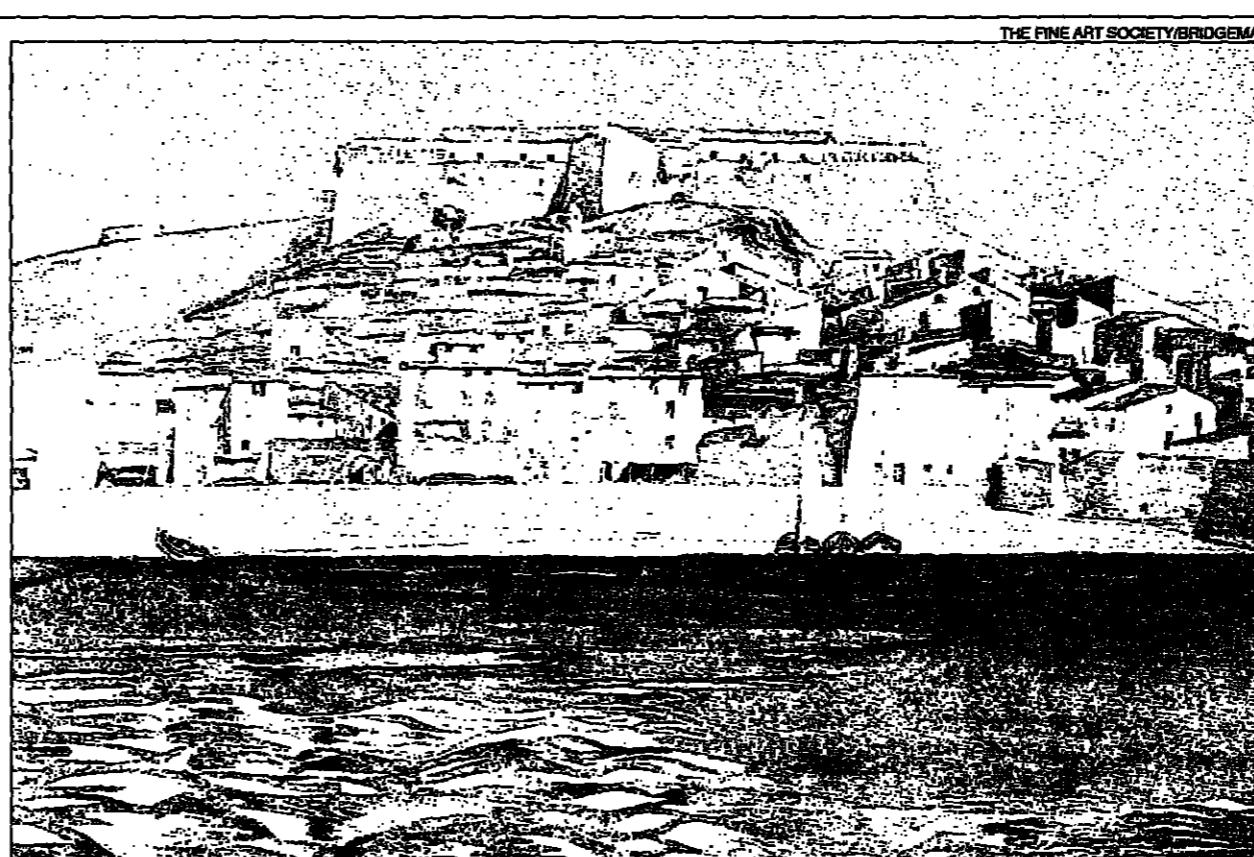
The River Aude also spills out of the Pyrenees and the valley provides a spectacular drive. In the Défilé de Pierre-Lys, a gorge south of Quillan, the road passes under huge

engineered overhangs of rock like half-tunnels. The fast-flowing Aude provides Quillan with its main attraction, but after the gorge we did manage to squeeze in a sustaining bowl of cassoulet and a pitcher of red, just to calm the nerves.

On Sunday, the day we left, Collioure held a market. We could not resist buying some enormous olives, plus a few bottles of local wine and an extremely large jar of the anchovies the town specialises in. The olives lasted us a couple of days, the wine lingered for a couple of weeks. And the anchovies? Well, if anyone has a recipe, other than pizza or baked peppers, please let me know.

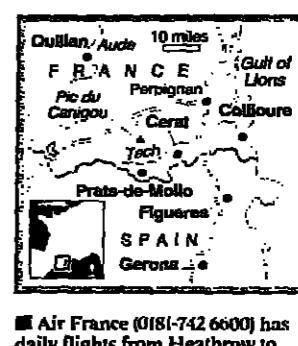
GERRY TAYLOR

■ The author was a guest of Inntravel.



A view of Collioure by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The fishing port has long been a favourite with artists

FACT FILE



■ Air France (0181-742 6600) has daily flights from Heathrow to Toulouse from £206.

■ Budget (051 566 656) has car hire from Toulouse from £123 for a week.

■ Inntravel (01653 628811) offers a three-night fly-drive to Collioure, via Toulouse, from £314. The price includes three nights' dinner and breakfast at Les Templiers. Air France flights and three days' car hire. Extra nights, with car hire, from £57.

■ Travelscene (0181-427 4445) has seven-night fly-drive holidays to Toulouse from £563, including car hire, flights and hotels.

■ Reading: *Languedoc Roussillon*, by Andrew Sanger (A&C Black, £12.99); *An Englishman in the Midi*, by John P. Harris (BBC, £4.99).

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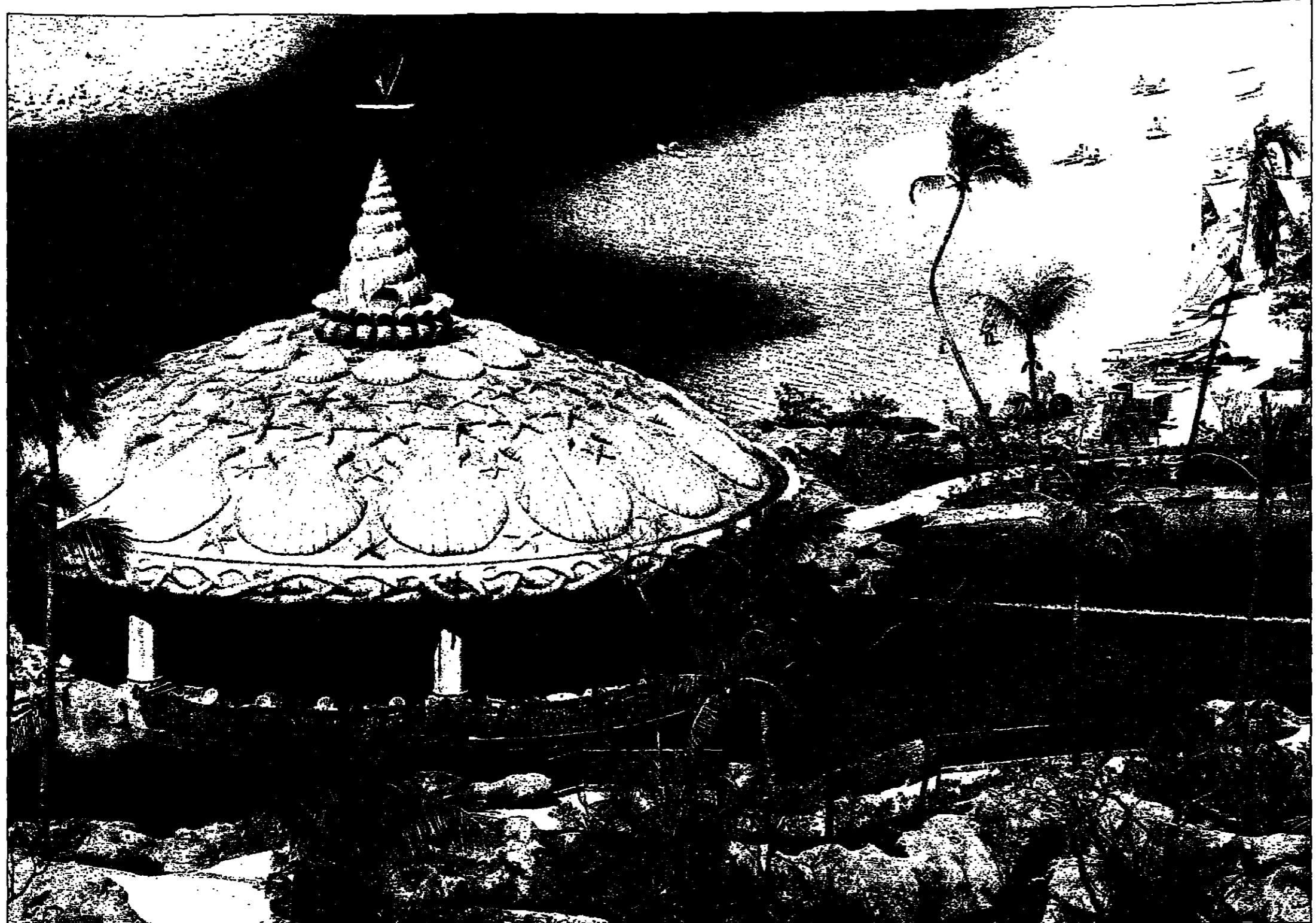
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The Bahamas: One is a swimming pool, the other a pool full of sharks - make sure you know which



The Atlantis is no ordinary hotel. Paths from bar to bar pass through Perspex tunnels surrounded by sea-turtles and barracuda. The Bahamas also offers guests the opportunity to swim with dolphins

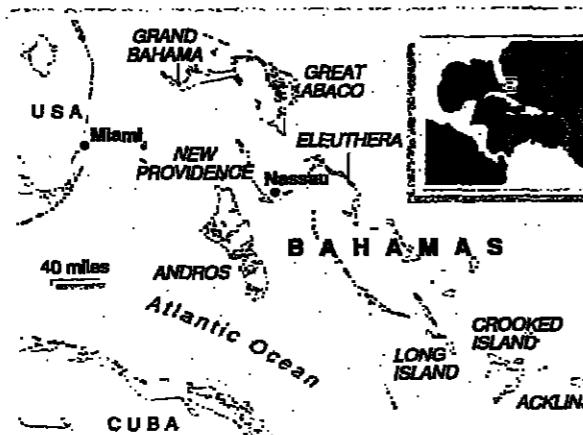
In at the deep end ... carefully

This is a holiday story about sea creatures. When we awoke after a transatlantic flight in a modern Bahamian hotel, our nine-year-old son was delighted to find long grey shapes basking in the pool outside his bedroom door. I assured him that they were plastic, that the large, black round thing, floating like a lorry's flat tyre, was a piece of Miami-style marine decoration, the sort of feature that one might expect in a waterfront casino-hotel where cruise ships call in.

He replied with greater assurance than mine. These sharks and stingrays were real, he said, pointing out clear movement among some of them. We decided that it would be wise, especially in any morning blur or after a pair of pina coladas, to take a careful check that the swimming pool was not also a sea aquarium. And so we did.

The Atlantis is no ordinary hotel. To walk from bar to bar is to pass through Perspex tunnels surrounded by sea-turtles and sea bass. What does the barracuda feed on, I asked one of the keepers. At 200lb, pretty much anything it wants, he replied, waving airily at clouds of blue and yellow tropical fish, enough to supply pet shops from Nassau to San Diego.

I had read a little Hemingway on the plane journey to acclimatise myself to what he described as these "islands in the Stream". So at least I recognised some of the creatures that the great fish-killer had made famous. I also flicked through two other books of local colour, the first an account of grisly mobster murder during the wartime governorship of the Duke of Windsor, the second a thin Sixties thriller about sex, sand, constrict-



tion and casinos. This novel, it soon became clear, was set in the early days of Paradise Island where our hotel was now standing.

There were dozens of easily recognisable details. If anyone were planning to settle in the Bahamas it would be well worth reading Robert Wilder's *An Affair of Honour* (even if it is available only in libraries).

The sharks there are white-faced and grey-suited. The dangers below the sea are a laboriously extended metaphor for the perils of black demagogues, bent bankers and small-time criminals in a small but expanding pond.

A navigator-hero has to find his way through identical-looking channels; on one side there is safety, beneath the other lie the wrecking rocks which for centuries have brought Bahamians their bony. Businessmen, he suggests, should beware.

Tourists, it appears, need to be less wary. The Bahamas today is making successful efforts to wel-

come its visitors. Outside Nassau's main streets, crime is low. A more useful book would have been a manual of the marine life, a guide to non-human sharks. As a gambling haven, Atlantis has Las Vegas games and Las Vegas rules: at least

if you were in the Nevada desert you could hope to hear Engelbert Humperdinck at the same time. But as an aquarium hotel, Atlantis is a real rarity — there can be few places in the world where fish and guests share so much space and

where barracuda and pina colada so pleasurable meet. Take a short boat ride and you can even break through the Perspex barriers. The dolphin-swimming experience used to be available in many American resorts until the sea creature protection leagues decided that it was a bad experience for the dolphins. But the Bahamas has long prided on relaxation.

Out on the tiny island bays — the sort that the wreckers used for trapping Spanish cargoes, the bootleggers used for taking prohibition bourbon to New York and where the drug-runners ran until the government was paid enough by Washington to run them out — you can swim with dolphins. One moment you are flat in the water, the next moment your feet are being pushed by double-dolphin power and your head is thrust high above the sea-surface like the angel's face on a galleon's prow.

Our second stop, on a one-week

half-term break, was on the outer islands known as the Abacos. The Bluff House Club is a group of cottages around a meeting place and restaurant. There is a party almost every night, an atmosphere as far as possible from that of a casino — and the sharks and rays here have no keeper. This is the formerly barren bit of the Bahamas where Americans loyal to George III shipped up after losing the War of Independence.

New Plymouth, a golf-buggy ride from Bluff House, is still a place of clapboard houses and colonial memorabilia. Despite a hundred hurricanes it still looks like a piece of New England — and hence a piece of old England too.

Lincoln, the hotel's local hero, takes us fishing for half a day. At first our attempts at Hemingway-emulation are weaker than we could imagine. One hour produced a single miserable trigger fish, a stubby cobalt and orange creature that Atlantis would have used for shark food. But then came a half dozen groupers and a harpoon full of lobsters for broiling on the beach.

During Lincoln's cooking show, we went swimming beside the pines of Munjag bay. This was more like a community centre than a club, and was buzzing as much outside as within. We hitched rides with islanders to other quieter bars, where the welcome was still warm and the rum just as strong.

Then, bathed in the wonderful warmth of the evening, it was time for a dip in the freshwater pool at Pink Sands, and a stroll along the beach. With a cocktail in hand, sand in my toes and the sound of the sea in my ears, I was ready to fall asleep in one of the most heavenly places on Earth.

ANJANA AHUJA

• The author was a guest of the Bahamas Tourist Office. Island Outpost (0800 614799) offers half-board packages at Pink Sands from £1330 (E190) for a one-bedroom cottage in summer. Caribbean Connection (01244 34113), Elegant Resorts (01244 897999) and Cariboutours (0171 581 3517) also offer packages to Pink Sands.



Unwinding at the Bluff House Club where the emphasis is on relaxation

BAHAMAS FACT FILE

■ Several tour operators feature the islands. Kuoni (01306 742222) has seven nights at the Atlantis from £863, room-only, from September-December. Thomson Holidays (0990 502555) starts charter flights to the Bahamas from Gatwick and Manchester in May until October 25. Prices for a two-week holiday, room-only, start at £795.

■ The Bahamas Reservation Service (0171 434 9915) will book hotels.

Seven nights at the Atlantis on Paradise Island starts from £696, room-only, based on two sharing. Prices for seven nights at Bluff House start at £630.

The Atlantis is also represented in the UK by Sun International (01491 412222). Summer room rates, excluding local taxes, start at \$145 (E85).

■ American Airlines (0181 572 5559) flies daily to Nassau via Miami.

Prices start at £440 in low season and £512 high season.

■ British Airways (0345 222111) flies on Tuesdays and Fridays direct to Nassau. Tickets booked 21 days in advance cost £691 including tax.

■ For further information: The Bahamas Tourist Office (01483 449900).

■ Reading: *The Story of the Bahamas*, by Paul Albury (Macmillan, £5.99); *Islands in the Stream*, by Ernest Hemingway (Flamingo, £15.99); *Insight Guide: Bahamas* (£12.99).

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PETER STOTHARD

• The author was a guest of the Bahamas Tourist Office.

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WEEKEND · SATURDAY APRIL 26 1997
The Baltic:
Ain't like

July 10 1997

The Baltic: From the seductively gentle charm of Denmark to the wildlife in Finland's woods and lakes

PICTURES

Ain't nothing like a Dane



I always feel at home in north Jutland. No, I don't speak Danish, but it has never been a problem. I have always taken the attitude that our national tongues stem from one, basic north European language; it may not be historical fact, but it is a workable theory.

Let me explain. To understand Danish road signs, you merely pretend you are reading German, pronounce the words with a Dutch accent, and imagine you are listening to a Glaswegian. It really is as straightforward as that. A little lateral thinking helps, too. For example, let's say you arrive, as I did, in Sæby. It is by the sea: transpose the vowels. Easy.

If the weather is good you will head for the strand (beach, as in German); if not, the town centrum where the turistbureau will probably recommend a visit to the kirke (Scots) with its vivacious medieval frescoes, or the nearby Gedehjørnet ("Goat-mountain") — say Gede with a very heavy Dutch accent and think of berg as the German berg. OK, it is stretching it a bit. There you can enjoy views over the historiske little port before dropping off your letters home at the posthus (Dutch-Glaswegian).

If all that polyglottery sounds like too much effort, remember that most Danes speak near-perfect English and will bend over backwards to be helpful. In fact, they have made a cult of un hurried, hassle-free, tolerant existence, calling it hygge; one word which even a Berlin-born Netherlander from the Gorbals would be hard-pressed to translate. It is pure Daneness.

Nowhere are the Danes more Danish than in Vendsyssel, the tip of the Jutland peninsula. I love this place; when an unexpected work-break opened last summer, the yearning to be there was irresistible. The only hurdle was financial: Denmark is a relatively expensive country to reach and to subsist in. The solution was drastic but instantly effective. At the age of 40, I rejoined the Youth Hostel Association and took advantage of the cross-Channel price wars. I ferried cheaply to Calais at dawn with my old but game Fiat Panda, then made the long trek north through the Low Countries and Germany.

It was two days' hard drive, with a stopover north of Hamburg, but I reached Vendsyssel mid-afternoon. My two Danish hostels, Sæby and Bronderslev, were spick and span and comfortable and both attached to leisure cen-

DENMARK FACT FILE	
■ Total cost of the author's holiday was about £400 including ferry, petrol, accommodation and food.	fax. Dormitories in Danish hostels are likely to be mixed-sex unless you request otherwise. Family and double rooms are available.
■ Scandinavian Seaways (0900 333000) crosses from Harwich to Esbjerg, Jutland. From £443 for one car and driver; £551 for a car and four passengers.	■ Food: In Jutland basic fish and chip-type food can be found for DK85 (about £7.50) including a beer, on harbour quays or at hotel cafeterias. Some hostels offer breakfast, others have self-catering facilities.
■ Accommodation: Joining the YHA costs £9.30; a substantial and informative guidebook on European hostels is £6.29 to members.	■ Meals out (pizza, Chinese etc) cost about £12 per person including beer. Local cuisine, such as smørrebrød, £12-£20 a head. About £100 (DK950) should see a person of moderate appetite, and with a taste for Scandinavian beer, through the week.
■ Each hostel cost about £8.50 per night. I booked in advance by	■ Vendsyssel Festival: For 1997 brochures/details, call 00 45 9892 4588. A Blue Card gives entrance to all concerts for DK400 (£39) for two.
	■ Further information: Danish Tourist Board, 55 Sloane Street, London SW1X 9SY (0171-259 5958).
	■ Reading: Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow, by Peter Høeg (Panther, £6.99). Blue Guide Denmark (A&C Black, £12.99).

Summer Evening on South Beach (detail) at the Skagen Museum

tres with thoroughly affordable cafeterias.

So what was it that lured me there? Vendsyssel is a very special stretch of land, but you have to be attuned to its pace and values. It is neither an Arctic tundra nor a Mediterranean hot-spot, being no further north than Inverness nor south than Aberdeen.

Having said that, the Danish summer can be glorious and there is no better place to be when the sun shines. A pewter-coloured beach is never more than 20 minutes' drive away, and the relaxed atmosphere there, with near-nudity optional but unexceptional for all ages, is wonderfully refreshing.

Sæby is good place to begin acquaintance with Vendsyssel. A Viking harbour that mellowed into a fishing port, it retains a 19th-century atmosphere, with half-timbered houses painted in warm ochres and rusts. Plaice and herring are dried and smoked on the quay, from where you can follow the course of the river inland, walking between red beds and pleasant lawns punctuated with quirky sculptures.

It is as quaint as north Jutland gets, but Sæby stops well short of being twee; go directly across to Løkken, on the west coast, and you will come across Vendsyssel's nearest thing to brashness and

fact, the contrast is not that great. Løkken allows cars on to its beach and you will see the flags of Norway, Sweden and Germany hoisted piratically above some of the venerable camper vans; but if any of these holidaying students play their radios too loudly for your liking, just move a little further on. There is plenty of room for all.

Inland you will discover a gentle landscape — this is a gentle country — of glacially channelled hillocks clad in the blue-greens and yellow-golds of arable crops. Sprays of mauve or Wedgwood blue wildflower, and the ubiquitous chalk-coloured marguerite, dapple the meadows. Humanity is most often represented by white, signpost-shaped church towers or broad-hipped wooden windmills alongside their sleek young offspring, wind-turbines.

The scenery is more comforting than dramatic — Denmark's highest bump reaches a dizzy 147 metres and is called Sky Mountain, a typical piece of Danish wryness.

Explore Vendsyssel's undulations long enough and you will stumble across the strangest places: Rubjerg Knude, for example, is a lighthouse built in 1900 to warn mariners away from the shifting sands of the west coast. Nature struck back, piling up a huge dune to obscure the light. In 1968 the Danes shrugged, closed the lighthouse and

turned the building into a museum — of sand. The final irony is that the museum is slowly being engulfed by the stuff it commemorates.

Further north you will come across a huge migratory zone, Rubjerg Mile, a mini-desert that roams the countryside. Once, habitation of north Jutland was a constant battle against sand-drift and sand storms. Canny planting finally calmed the terrain, but Rubjerg Mile has been left as a reminder of the past.

Continue north and you will come to Grenen, a final, tapering frond of sand at Denmark's very tip. On a warm day you will see holidaying Danes crowding on to this narrow space for the pleasure of standing with each foot in a different sea — the

Skagerrak or the Kattegat. It is tradition, but whether it brings good luck or just a warm glow of hygge I cannot say. Below Grenen is the lively port-resort of Skagen, and one of my favourite spots — the museum of the Danish Impressionists.

An artists' colony settled here in the late 19th century, to take advantage of the prismatic light. P.S. Krøyer and his colleagues captured on canvas the lunar silver of the beaches, the skies' glorious transition from deep cobalt overhead through luminous gradations of blue to the translucent eggshell of the horizon.

This time my visit to the museum had a special magic,

for it was the setting for a concert in the Vendsyssel Festival. Each summer, in July and August, Danish and visiting musicians give concerts in venues throughout the region.

The atmosphere is intimate and friendly and the quality of performance is high. On this occasion Denmark's internationally renowned Kontra Quartet gave an extra vibrance to the paintings.

As I looked at the glowing canvases and at the wise, open faces of the Danes around me, I realised why I feel so strongly about this museum. These artists celebrated the beauty and goodness of Vendsyssel. Like me, they thought it one of the most special places on earth.

BRIAN HUNT

All the beasts of the forest

FACT FILE

- Finnair (0900 997711) has regular flights from Heathrow to Helsinki, from £224 return. Internal flights to Oulu cost from £101.
- Finnair (00 358 8 381914) runs tailor-made wildlife tours, with B&B from £15 per night and forest guides from £25 per hour.
- Contact the Finnish Tourist Board, 30-35 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5LP (0171-930 5871).
- Reading: Where to watch birds in Scandinavia (Hamlyn Birdwatching Guides £16.99).

It is times its population these thousands of miles of open-access forest were bliss. Little of it is original uncut or "old growth" forest, however, for most of that is along the Russian border where it abuts a similar habitat on the other side.

This is a stronghold of wolves, wolverines and brown bears and I stayed the night with Lassi Rautanen, a Finnish wildlife photographer. We slept in his hide, no more than a big wooden box, just a kilometre from the Russian border, with a couple of dead cows outside to attract the bears which were prowling



around. The first one rolled out of the forest into the clearing like a Russian tank. After a cautious entrance, he reached the first cow and, taking hold of it in his massive jaws, bunched his muscles and tugged it nearer to the forest, before wrenching off great chunks of flesh.

He disappeared and was replaced by two more bears, a male and his mate. I watched until past midnight, making full use of 24 hours of daylight to enjoy this rare spectacle.

The likelihood is that more Fins have seen Saimaa seals than bears, though, despite the fact that there are only about

200 of these endangered sub-species of the ringed seal left in existence. They have become something of a conservation cause and live in a small area of Lake Saimaa.

This is a convoluted and intricate body of water covering more than 400 square kilometres and is one of Finland's 180,000 lakes. I spent an evening on its shores with Jukka Janunen and his family, enjoying home-cooked Finnish food, freshly smoked fish, wonderful bird watching and a sauna.

It has been recognised by the World Wide Fund for Nature and has been declared a Natura 2000 site under a European Habitats Directive but, as Peltonen told me in exasperation, "Every summer hunters are still allowed to shoot more ducks here than hatch in the spring."

The long-standing Finnish tradition of the mocha-hunter surviving against all the odds in the wilderness is difficult to eradicate.

The likelihood is that more Fins have seen Saimaa seals than bears, though, despite the fact that there are only about



WORD WATCHING

Answers from page 25

SHILLING'S ORIFICE

(c) At the start of the 1939-45 war there was extreme concern that in real combat the Hurricanes and Spitfires suffered a severe loss of power when going into a dive. This was traced to loss of gravity in the carburetor. The German Me 109, having direct injection, did not suffer this problem. A Miss Shilling of RAE Farnborough solved the problem and made her name with a diaphragm with a small hole (orifice) placed inside the float chamber of the carburetor.

UROPHYSIS

(b) At the hind end of the spinal cord of fishes is a small lump consisting of masses of secretion produced by neurosecretory cells of the spinal cord, and hence called the urophysis. Its function appears to be connected with salt regulation. Injection of hypertonic NaCl produces hypersecretion, the products accumulating at the cut surface if the cord has been severed.

KWANGA

(b) In Zaire (formerly the Congo), a kind of bread made of manioc. The native name, "in those happy days ten cakes of kwanga could be bought for one brass rod."

KOWHAI

(a) A leguminous plant of New Zealand (*Sophora tetraptera*) bearing golden-yellow flowers. From the Maori name, Rudyard Kipling, Seven Seas, 1896: "Buy the kowhai's gold/ Flung for gift on Taupo's face."

AROUND THE WORLD: A WEEKEND GUIDE

Bound for Morocco



PANOS PICTURES

EXOTIC if expensive trips from Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions (0171-381 8638) include a long weekend in southern Morocco's ancient red-earth walled city of Taroudant.

The accommodation is the five-star Gazele d'Or Hotel, tucked away in secluded 250-acre gardens and orange groves, with the snowcapped Atlas Mountains as a backdrop. Taroudant's souks are excellent and the resort of Agadir is nearby. Flights, transfers and three nights' half-board accommodation are included in the price of £725.

A quick look at Lebanon

THE historical highlights of the Lebanon are included on the new three-night tour from Sunvil Holidays (0181-568 4499) with £527 covering flights, B&B accommodation and guiding throughout.

Baalbek is one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the world, with Roman columns embedded in Arab walls. Hellenistic remains packed with prehistoric stones. The enchanting fishing village also claims the first Roman example of the alphabet, as well as giving its name to the Bible — the word means book. The site of Baalbek, the ancient City of the Sun, shocks by its sheer vastness. Just one of its smaller temples is larger than the Pantheon, though as a symbol of power the Roman city proved a largely vain gesture.

An Islamic Umayyad 8th-century walled city and the 18th-century Arabian Beiteddine Palace are also on the itinerary. Fly-drive options are available for those who prefer to explore independently.

FOR those wanting to get away immediately after the election, Ablesbury & Clarke (01730 893344) offers a champagne weekend from May 3-5. The price of £269 includes coach travel, ferry crossing, two nights' accommodation in a three-star hotel in Rheims with champagne for breakfast, one lunch and dinner, and a champagne tasting.

Famous food

A TEMPTING collection of short breaks have been organised by Inntravel (01635 628811). They include walking (with luggage transported), cooking, gastronomic fly-drive and treasure hunts, staying in family-run auberges and hotels in unspoilt nooks and crannies of France, Spain and Italy.

A three-night fly-drive break in wooded Cathar country in the picture postcard village of Najac

costs £329. It is based at the Ostal del Barry, which has been in the same family for generations and where the mansard rooms overlook medieval streets, the River Aveyron and a fairy-tale ruined 13th-century castle. People come from far and wide for the regional cooking. The price includes flights, car hire and half-board.

A WEEKEND break organised by Cycling for Sofites (0161-248 8282) at Duras, in the Dordogne and Garonne, put the Bordeaux and Bergerac vineyards within easy biking reach for wine tastings. The price of £380 covers two nights' half-board in a family-run hotel with its own pool and cycle hire, but not flights.

Right for Riga

GOVERNMENTS form and dissolve every few months in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, but few locals care and tourists rarely notice. Their capital cities of Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius can now offer considerably more 1990s comforts but with 1970s prices in local shops and restaurants.

Three nights' B&B in Tallinn from Bristol-based Regent Holidays (017421 1711) costs £210, in Riga £252 and in Vilnius £246, including direct flights from Heathrow or Gatwick.

Battle memories

HISTORY and battlefield specialist Holts Tours (01304 612248) is offering a number of new guided tours in its 21st anniversary brochure. A four-night Peninsular Walk "The Stand on the Frontier — 1810-1812" studies the cat-and-mouse game of 1810 played around Almeida and along the River Coa, moving on to the horizons of Salamanca where "... forty thousand French were beat in forty minutes". This costs £981.

It is 80 years since General Plumer led the successful capture of Messines before the disaster of Ypres: a two-night tour in June, staying in Ypres (half-board) with visits to the battlefields and trenches, costs £305, including the ferry crossing. The Last Post ceremony in Ypres is a heart-wrencher.

CITY breaks of four nights

for £650 between June and August from Specialised Tours (01342 712789) combine Helsinki with a visa-free cruise to St Petersburg. After flying to Helsinki for one night's B&B, the break continues with a three-night cruise to the Russian city (with full board), and a half-day sightseeing tour.

Austrian value

IMPROVING exchange rates of nearly 20 shillings to £1 make Austria affordable, and a four-night break at the luxury Relais & Château Gruner Baum Hotel near Badgastein, with all meals and drinks, and a massage and facial in the hotel's thermal spa, repre-

sents genuine value for £315. Once

a hunting lodge belonging to Archduke Johann, the old wooden chalet-style hotel has been in the same family for generations. An excursion in the hotel's vintage picnic car and a hearty mountain breakfast in the hills are also part of the deal, which lasts until June 17. Flights from Lauda Air cost £197 return. Details from Windotel (0171-730 7144).

Natural break

THE north Norfolk coast with its secret creeks, dunes and reserves is a birdwatchers' delight in May, when the harriers, bitterns, bearded tits and avocets are preening themselves over their breeding sites, and the freshwater marshes are teeming with waders.

Naturetel (01962 733051) has a two-night mid-May break when the aim is to find and identify as

JILL CRAWSHAW'S ELECTION GETAWAYS

many East Anglian species as possible. The base is the resort-cum-working port of Wells-next-the-Sea, and the price is £149 half-board.

If Norfolk is the Mecca for birds, Ireland's strange limestone Burren is a natural rock garden that nurtures a huge variety of colourful and unique plants.

Naturetel's three-night half-board weekend from May 23-26 costs £299 (without flights) with hotel accommodation at Liscadden varna. Both trips are led by experts.

A CHANCE to learn a hobby which can become an obsession is offered by

Angling Travel (01263 761602). Its two-night weekend courses in the UK, with John Bailey, the expert fisherman and television presenter, include trout fishing in June and September on the

Bargain offers

SAVINGS of up to 25 per cent and more have been announced by short-break specialist Kirker Holidays (0171-231 3333).

A four-night break in a three-star hotel in the centre of Madrid with B&B, is reduced to £299 from £357. A two-night break to Paris travelling by Eurostar with accommodation in a central three-star hotel, a Seine minicruise, a carnet of Metro tickets and dinner at Brasserie Flo, now costs £263.

PERFORMANCES of Tosca, La Traviata, Così Fan Tutte and Madama Butterfly at Prague's State Opera House are the highlights of a series of two-night weekend breaks (Saturday night must be one of them) with Fregata (0171-451 7066). The breaks cost £348 including B&B at a three-star hotel, return flights from Heathrow and a city tour. Opera tickets are between £20 and £30.

Wish you were here?

Jeremy Seal on the travel guide to hell



Waiting to greet you: troops in war-torn Afghanistan

A guidebook which tells the going rate charged by the Chechen mafia for battlefield tours, how to bribe your way out of jail and how to survive shell or rocket attacks in war zones is doing brisk business. It is even outselling some of the mainstream travel guides.

The first edition of American publisher Fielding's *The World's Most Dangerous Places* sold 30,000 copies in America last year. Since January, when the second edition was first distributed in Britain, it has been selling "surprisingly well", says Douglas Schatz at Stanfords' Travel Bookshop, Covent Garden, central London.

The guide covers threats from terrorists and brutal dictators to disease and getting caught up in the drugs business. Information on comparative death rates in notorious minibuses from Lima to Nairobi is also included. You are advised against flying in Russia, Colombia and India, and told to watch out for tourist crime in Brazil, Spain and Florida ("As soon as you don that Hawaiian shirt, you may as well paint a bull's eye on your back").

There are assessments on more than 30 "dangerous"

places, with Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, Colombia and Somalia heading the list. Separate sections concentrate on places that are forbidden to Americans (but often not to Brits), such as Iran and Cuba.

Because many of the featured countries — Iran, Burma, Cambodia, Ethiopia and Turkey — are available through tour operators, it is tempting to put the success of *Dangerous Places* down to a death wish among travellers. In fact, the tour operators that feature such countries conspicuously avoid the danger spots.

Steppes East features Burma and Cambodia, notorious for anti-personnel mines. "There is a risk," says Nick Laing, the managing director.

"but only if you go way off the tourist routes, which we do not." Exodus has been so successful selling Iran that it is running a new tour this year to the country's Valley of the Assassins — not the alarming place it sounds but impressive trekking country.

Despite the Japanese embassy siege in Lima, Peru has attracted 50 per cent more tourists every year since 1994.

The guide's writers are veterans of everything from jail and mid-air hijacks to attacks by African killer bees. Emulating them is apparently not much of a factor in buying the book. "Sure, there's always the occasional nutcase heading for Burundi," says Hugh Brune at Portfolio, the guide's UK distributor, "but it's an armchair read for most people."

So sit back and read about

Algeria, "the world's most dangerous place for foreigners; a country where fundamentalists ... like to cut throats and shoot experts", and eye-witness accounts of meeting warlords in eastern Turkey, and surviving the Los Angeles riots.

Richard Trillo, at Rough Guides, considers the book "ghoulish but fascinating", and thinks it will have added appeal for people who travelled to now-banned destinations, such as Afghanistan, in happier days.

In case you are planning such a trip, *Dangerous Places* prints a lengthy disclaimer by the publishers.

• *The World's Most Dangerous Places* (Fielding, £13.95).

What can I do with that old barn?

See p.23



Singles get an unfair deal

From Mary Simmons, Abingdon:

I sympathise with Jean Leffey (Weekend, April 12) wanting to travel to Italy at a leisurely pace. I am also alone, as are thousands of others who are widowed or single. My main concern is that you have to pay a hefty supplement for a single room. I cannot understand why you should have to pay so much more for a holiday than somebody sharing a twin-bedded room. Even if you go away with a friend, you do not necessarily want to share a room with them. I did last year and discovered that she snored.

From Clifford Homann, Driffield, East Yorkshire:

It would appear Cuba is becoming ever more popular as a holiday destination by the British. This is fine as Cuba is desperately short of dollars and, in addition, several consumer items. May I appeal to anyone travelling there to take ballpoint pens to give to children, T-shirts of all sizes and chewing gum. But the most important commodity is soap, which is severely rationed (a small, hotel complimentary-sized bar per family per month). A few small gifts such as these would make an appreciable difference to Cubans.

We welcome letters on holiday travel. Send them to: Letters, Travel Department, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN or fax 0171-782 5124.

HOLIDAYMAKERS already suffering this week from airport and ferry disruptions face yet another summer of travel discontent with warnings of long delays in flights to Greece.

Leaked documents from the Greek Civil Aviation Authority claim that 45 per cent of radar equipment at Greek airports is out of order, along with the landing systems at Athens and Rhodes airports.

Other technical problems have led to an urgent plea from the GCAA to resolve the issue. It warns that otherwise it would be unable to cope with the volume of air traffic and flight numbers would consequently have to be reduced.

The warning follows the closure of Garwick, Luton and Stansted airports last Monday due to bomb threats, and also the blockade of Calais, Boulogne and Dunkirk by French fishermen.

CRUISING is becoming a younger person's holiday — but only slowly. Last year, the average British cruise passenger was aged 56, two years younger than in 1994, according to the Passenger Shipping Association.

More than 429,000 people took a cruise in 1996, up by a fifth over 1995, with the Mediterranean accounting for 40 per cent of the market. And this growing appeal has brought about stronger competition and lower prices.

The average price paid last year was £1,391, compared to £1,385 two years ago.

A NEW car ferry service will connect Liverpool to Dublin from June 12. The Isle of Man

Steam Packet Company (01624 645645) will operate a conventional daily ferry, the journey taking six and a half hours. On Wednesdays a catamaran will run, trimming two hours off the trip.

THE STRENGTH of sterling against several currencies has seen Keith Prowse (01232 232425) reduce the price of tickets to Port Aventura theme park near Barcelona. Adult prices for one-day tickets fall to £20 (from £22.50) and child prices to £15.50 (from £17.50). Two and three-day tickets are available.

ELECTION day also sees the start of a Garwick-Lisbon service by AB Airlines. The

company (0345 464749) is operating twice a day (once on Saturdays), with fares starting at £119 return.

GROWING tourist and business travel interest in the Baltic states has seen Estonian Air cut fares to Tallinn. The airline (0171-333 0196), which flies from Gatwick, has cut fares to £230, although a Saturday night stay is required.

FLYING from Gatwick is most likely to add to holiday delays, according to new statistics from the Civil Aviation Authority.

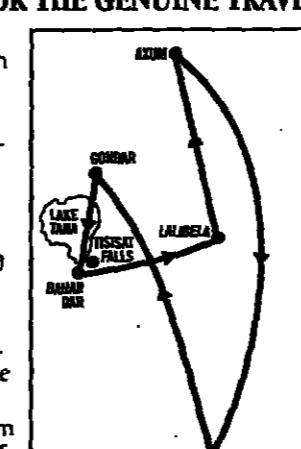
Charter flights were delayed by an average 45 minutes last year, the worst of five airports studied. Gatwick was also slowed in 1996, with average 37-minute delays. Next worst is Manchester, averaging 34 minutes wait (1995: 33); Stansted 29 (32); Luton 24 (29) and Birmingham 21 (25).

Go-slow in Greece

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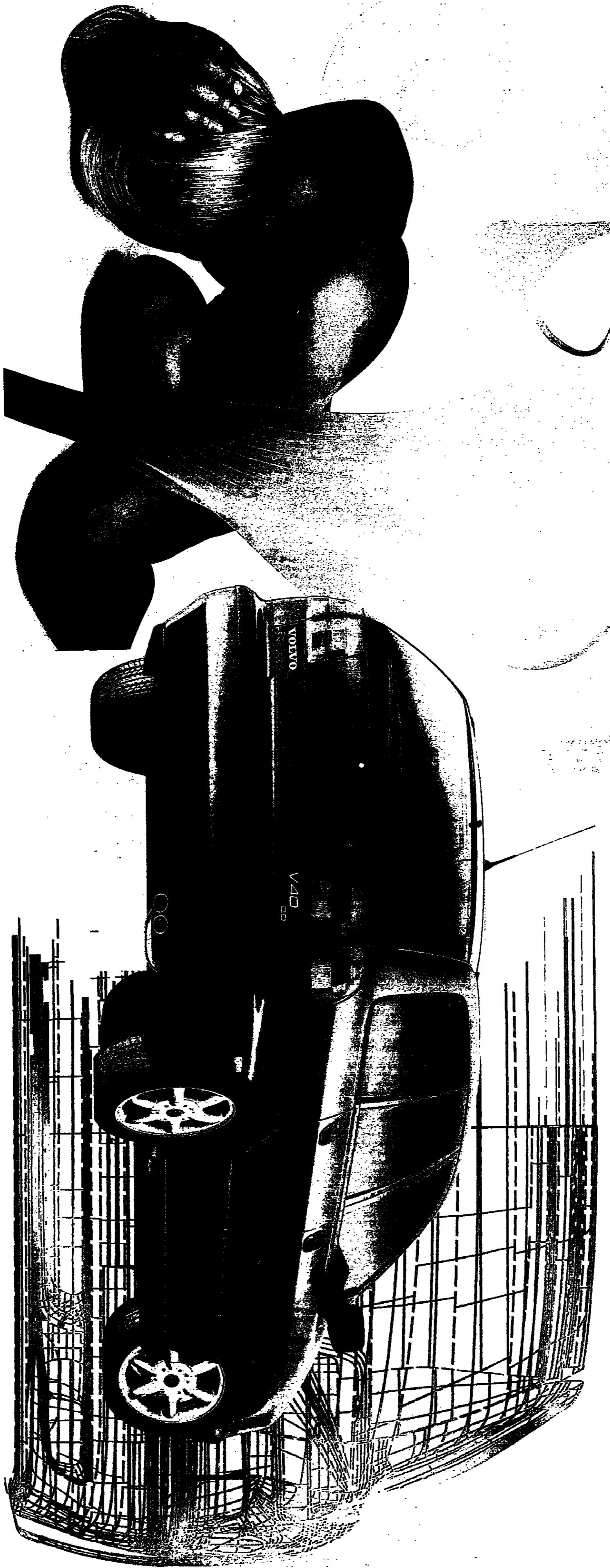
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Return
of the
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Page 3

CAR 97

Putting
the MG's
history
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the map

Page 5



SATURDAY APRIL 26 1997

Is it written in stone that Formula One is for men only? Helen Mound reports on research into the question



Karting champion Charis Kaps, right, is determined to persevere with her racing career, but in the 46-year history of the world drivers' championship only a handful of women have competed

Women in the outside lane

No sport is more steeped in machismo than motor racing, and Formula One is the pinnacle of this male-dominated arena. Every winner is a man's man and the idea of a woman world champion seems unthinkable. But why? For karting champion Charis Kaps, 12, who might just be the girl to change all that, the answer is vital.

In the 46-year history of the world drivers' championship only a handful of women have competed and only two have ever completed races. Their collective success amounts to just one half of a point.

Now the RAC Motorsport Association has commissioned Judy Eaton, a psychology lecturer at Coventry University, to find out why there is such a low level of female participation in motorsport.

"Only 2 per cent of competitive motorsport licence holders in Britain are women," says Dr Eaton. "The RAC wants to find out why this is and encourage more women into the sport."

Over the next 18 months Dr

Eaton's research will examine the social and psychological barriers faced by women in motor racing. She recently completed preliminary interviews with females aged 12 to 40, who either have raced or are currently competing.

International rally driving champion, Louise Aitken-Walker, who retired from rallying to look after her children four years ago, is well aware of the barriers. Despite her own success, she doubts there will be a successful British female Formula One driver in her lifetime.

She is probably right unless women can overcome some of the problems already revealed by Dr Eaton's research.

Murray Walker, veteran grand prix commentator, agrees with Aitken-Walker's rather gloomy view: "Women tend not to be strong enough or aggressive enough."

Gavin Kelsey, operations director of the Jim Russell Racing School, where about 20 per cent of pupils are women, is a bit more optimistic: "I hope so. But what's missing is a good role model to encour-

age them to compete." But Matt Franey, deputy editor of Autosport says: "The odds are stacked against them because there are so few competing."

And even Nicola Foulston, chief executive of Brands Hatch, a woman who has succeeded in the administrative side of this male-dominant

field says: "No. There aren't many determined enough."

Forty per cent of youngsters aged eight to 12 in karting — the first step into a motor racing career — are girls. But as they get older and the sport gets more professional, the number of women competing reduces dramatically.

These young women are being turned off motor racing either by the physical changes they experience or peer pressure and a need to fit in with other teenagers," claims Dr Eaton. She feels the key to increasing the number of women who remain in racing through their teens is to make

motorsport more acceptable to girls at an early age.

Among the older age group, Dr Eaton found the problem isn't that women give up but that they feel forced out. "Many talk of being pushed off the track, receiving excessive scrutineering because male competitors insist they're

cheating, or facing verbal abuse."

The majority also complain of being discouraged by the lack of finances.

Aitken-Walker agrees that money is a major factor: "It's very difficult for women to be taken seriously in any form of motorsport. They need to

show real determination to convince the male managers they're not wasting money."

The next step in the research will be to ascertain what attracts certain girls to motor racing in the first place and how that motivation can be maintained.

"One definite feeling is that women don't want girl-only events. Whether it's possible for them to compete at the same level as men all the way through to Formula One has yet to be proved, but that's what the women want."

There are currently a handful of female co-drivers in World Championship Rallying, and in the early 1980s Michele Mouton of France became extremely successful at world level, beating many respected male drivers, but she remains an exception.

The research has included interviewing parents or partners of female competitors to gauge the support they receive. Dr Eaton points to the support World Formula One Champion Nigel Mansell received from his family as a possible element to success.

"He sold his house to help finance his racing career, he will have needed his family behind him to achieve that. Perhaps if more women had friends and family that believed in their abilities as passionately they would stay in the sport."

Dr Eaton, who has raced herself and runs her own racing kart, accepts that most sports have gender role expectations — "Boys play football, girls play hockey" — but she hopes her research will reveal ways to make motorsport more attractive to women.

Perhaps then Britain will see its first champion female Formula One driver.

To help compare women's role in motorsport, Coventry University now wants to interview aspiring male racing drivers aged 12-40. Please call 01203 838739.



You can count them on one hand...

THE ONLY British female contender in Formula One was Divina Galica. She entered the 1976 British Grand Prix and the Argentinian and Brazilian events in 1978, but failed to qualify in any. In 1975, Lella Lombardi became the only woman to score in the Formula One drivers' championship. She was competing in the Spanish Grand Prix which was stopped, automatically granting entrants a half point.

The first woman to contest a World Championship Grand Prix was the Italian Maria-Teresa de Filippis, who entered five races in 1958-59, qualified for three and finished one, the 1958 Belgian Grand Prix in 10th place in a Maserati 250F. In 1980 Desire Wilson from South Africa attempted to drive in the British Grand Prix but failed to qualify. And the most recent woman to compete in Formula One was Giovanna Amati who in 1992 entered the South African, Mexican and Brazilian grands prix in a Brabham but failed to qualify for any of them.



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The RAC, primarily an organisation for motorists, is sounding far more radical on the subject of transport than any of the parties seeking our votes

Now it's the Royal All-transport Club

New Labour, new RAC. New logo, new colour for breakdown vans, even a new bicycle on the market. Whatever is going on at the Royal Automobile Club, that defender of the right to drive, campaigner for better roads, safer roads, more roads? Something good as it happens.

There has been a certain amount of spluttering from the Luddites since the RAC announcement that it was updating its image and shifting the emphasis of its work to encourage a broader approach to transport. The Association of British Motorists, for one, is upset, but they would be, wouldn't they?

As a member of the RAC, I must declare an interest and I am sure from speaking to its members that the AA is an excellent organisation: this is a market where all of

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

us want to see healthy competition. The RAC move is a bold one and deserves to be encouraged.

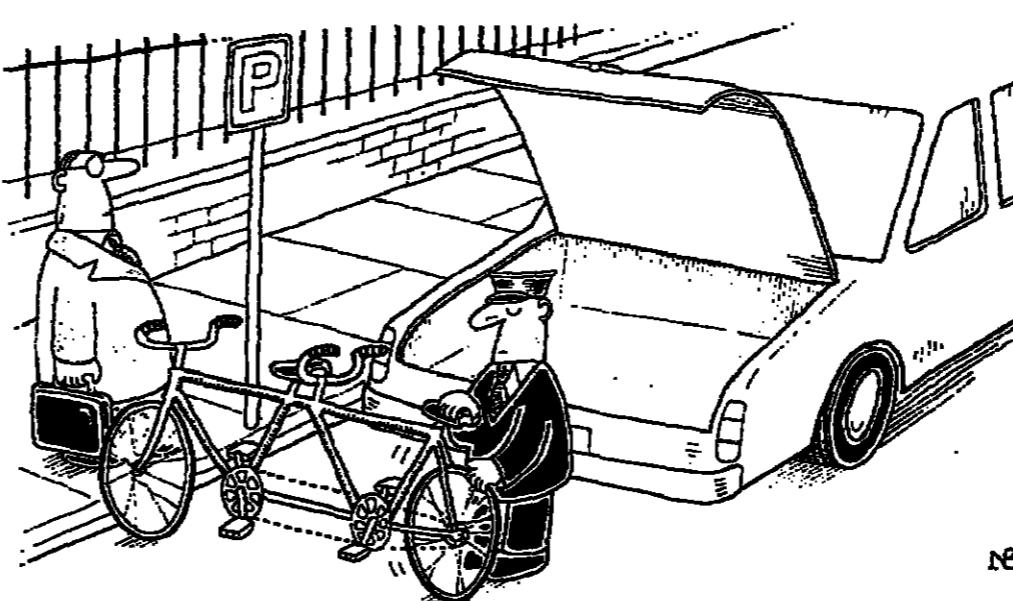
Some details of the RAC changes show real imagination, others are long overdue. In the latter category comes the £25 discount for members who do not use the breakdown

service in a given year, effectively a no-claims bonus. This should have been introduced years ago.

Chief executive Neil Johnson wants to give the values of the RAC, established 100 years ago, a 21st-century look. Our members are not just motorists. They also cycle, walk and use public transport. Well yes, but as General Alexander Haig was fond of saying, I would have to caveat that.

Certainly the launch of the RAC's all-purpose bicycle, designed to be folded up and stowed in the boot so that drivers have two forms of transport to get where they are going, is an innovative idea — though there are plenty of other fold-up bikes around.

But my mention of New Labour was not merely a tenuous linking mechanism. If there is a change of government next week, I see little



than by the diverse organisations that now represent them. Cyclists and drivers united in common cause? The mind boggles.

I do not take the cynical view that the RAC's conversion to a wider cause is simply a drive for more members. But it knows as well as the rest of us that something has to happen at the centre of power before the commonality of interest between all transport users elicits a real change in the quality of travel.

The activities of the IRA have shown just how easily gridlock can be caused, but such aberrations can disguise the fact that the absence of an integrated transport policy will cause near-permanent gridlock within a decade. There will come a time, unless things change, when we shall do the IRA's dirty work for them.

DRIVERS who need spectacles should watch out if they are heading for Devon and Cornwall on holiday where police are making random checks on eyesight using the usual numberplate at 20-metre test. I hear they are not amused, or swayed, by the people with spectacles in the glove compartment who are not actually wearing them.

A crook to lock out car thieves

When a security firm wanted expert advice they advertised for a criminal, says Eve-Ann Prentice



Anonymous "Mr Toad" can strip a car to the bone in less than four hours and claims to be able to drive anything from motorcycles to juggernauts

Competition for the car crime consultancy job was stiff but the applicant's credentials were perfect. Vegetarian, a non-smoker and teetotal, the man from the North-East had 25 years' experience as a car thief.

This week the man, who wants to remain anonymous, began work as crime fighter consultant to the car security company, Toad Innovations. He is also trying to establish his own consultancy business, having persuaded the police and his new employers that he "retired" from his life of crime three years ago.

The road to thieving began when the man, whom we shall call Mr Toad, was just 12 years old. "I didn't attend school very often, but sometimes illegally drove myself there," he said last week. His education in what became his chosen field for the next quarter of a century was prison.

"My first prison sentence was in 1982 and it secured my criminal career. So many connections made, so many ideas, prison is the school for crime," he says. "I was the victim of a broken home and received little or no parental guidance, soon drifting into crime and a first conviction at the age of 14."

Despite his quarter of a century as a car thief, during which crime was his main source of income, Mr Toad received just two jail sentences, one for 12 months and the second for nine months. He was never caught red-handed.

He says that he can strip a car to the bone in less than four hours and claims to be able to drive any vehicle from motorcycles to boats, cars, agricultural machinery and juggernauts.

Toad Innovations, based in Cambridge, advertised for a reformed, convicted ex-car thief in February and received dozens of replies from across the country, including applications for the consultancy job from two people who are still in prison.

"We are not seeking hi-tech information as much as psychological insight into the mind of the car criminal," said Kevin Gray, Toad's Chief Executive. The company pro-

duces a range of anti-theft devices including an anti-smash window film, a miniature in-car camera and a non-toxic smoke which fills cars after they are broken into.

I've been to crime seminars organised by the police and they were useless'

would never do and I think house burglars are the lowest of the low," he says. "I have on occasion returned property I have taken. If something was obviously personal it was not unknown for me to stick it in a bin bag and throw it over a person's garden wall the next time I happened to be passing."

The new consultant is also scathing about the prison system. "The short, sharp shock is not short enough," he says. "For the first two days you are inside it is such a shock you vow that, if you ever get out, you will never do anything wrong again and you mean it."

"But after the third day you start to fit in and people who are inside for insurance offences or having no tax disc become part of the criminal fraternity and realise that that can be their life from then on. It doesn't take Einstein to understand what prison does to a lot."

The reformed thief believes he can be especially helpful to Toad Innovations because he

will never do anything again and you mean it."

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TOAD'S TIPS

- Fit an alarm or immobiliser.
- Park in a well-lit place at night.
- Keep car keys well hidden at home. Thieves are increasingly entering homes to obtain keys.

● Try to park in the centre of car parks.

● Park near active places such as shopfronts and offices.

● Remove car keys at petrol stations — where 20,000 car thefts a year occur.

● Be aware that if thieves see you park outside a cinema or station they know you are likely to be gone for some hours.

way of thinking, but a reduction in vehicle crime has contributed significantly to an overall fall in the crime figures for the past four years. According to details published last month, 1.29 million vehicle crimes were reported to police in 1996, a 2.2 per cent fall from the 1.32 million in 1995. Thefts from vehicles were down by 13,600 or 2 per cent and thefts of vehicles were reduced by 15,100 or 3 per cent.

This is thought to be due partly to much more security

consciousness on the part of both motorists and manufacturers. Alarms and immobilisers have become major selling points. Stepped up police campaigns against car crime also seem to be having a deterrent effect with some forces investing in technology such as the "stinger" device imported from the United States, which can be deployed to stop a stolen car without the danger of a police chase.

For information on Toad Innovations' products call 01223 214555.



A police stinger device to stop stolen vehicles safely

AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

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A11 Leytonstone. Major

roadworks at the Green Man

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A306 Hammersmith

Bridge. Closed both ways to

general traffic for structural

works. Expect congestion on

both sides of the river.

A5 Kilburn High Road.

Reduced to one lane both

ways, with no right turn into

Belsize Road.

A3 Kingston bypass.

Northbound lane closure

between Shannon Corner

(A238) and Coombe Lane

junction [A238] for work on

Carters Bridge.

A205 Wandsworth.

Roadworks on Upper

Richmond Road between

Daylesford Avenue and West

Hill. Various restrictions

between 9.30am and 3.30pm.

B317 West Kensington.

North End Road closed

Northbound from Edith

Road to the A4, with one-way

traffic southbound. Expect

heavy congestion.

● SOUTH-EAST

A113 Wendover bypass,

Buckinghamshire.

Construction work for new

bypass. Restrictions on local

roads and Ellesborough

Road is closed.

M40 Buckinghamshire.

Long-term roadworks with

contraction between

junctions 1a (M25) and 3

(Wycombe East).

A130 Sandon, Essex.

Roadworks on Southend Road

at the Gingerbread Hall

bridge, with width restrictions.

A41 Watford, Hertfordshire.

Lane closed eastbound on

North Western Avenue from

the Hurstion Bridge roundabout

to the Leaheads Green

interchange.

M2 Kent. Long-term

roadworks at junction 4 (West

Malling). Various lane

closures on the slip road.

M25 Surrey. Various

restrictions and lane closures

both ways between Reigate

and the A3.

● WEST

M5 Bristol. Contraction

across Avonmouth Bridge with a

50mph limit.

A30 near Penzance,

Cornwall. Temporary lights

for water main work at

Crowles.

Long delays throughout the day.

A31 near Ferndown,

Dorset. Roadworks at Canford

Bottom, with lane closures

on roundabout.

M5 Gloucestershire.

Major roadworks with only one

lane open at the roundabout

junction with the A419. Expect

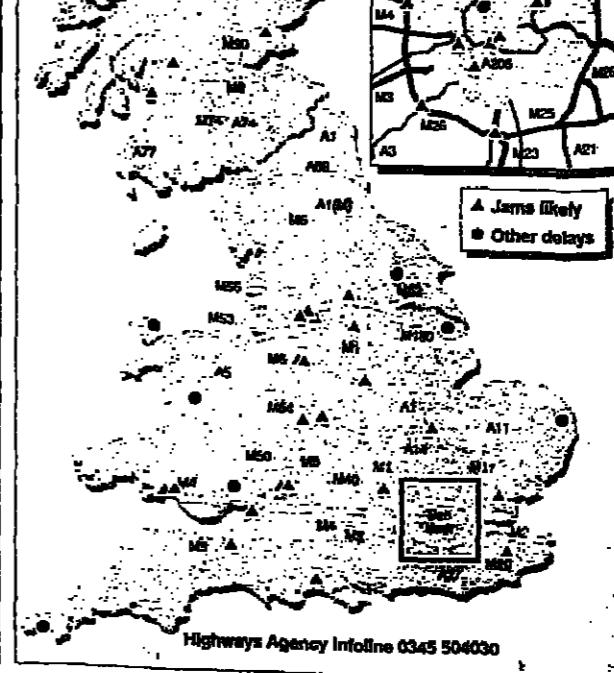
peak-time delays joining

leaving the M5.

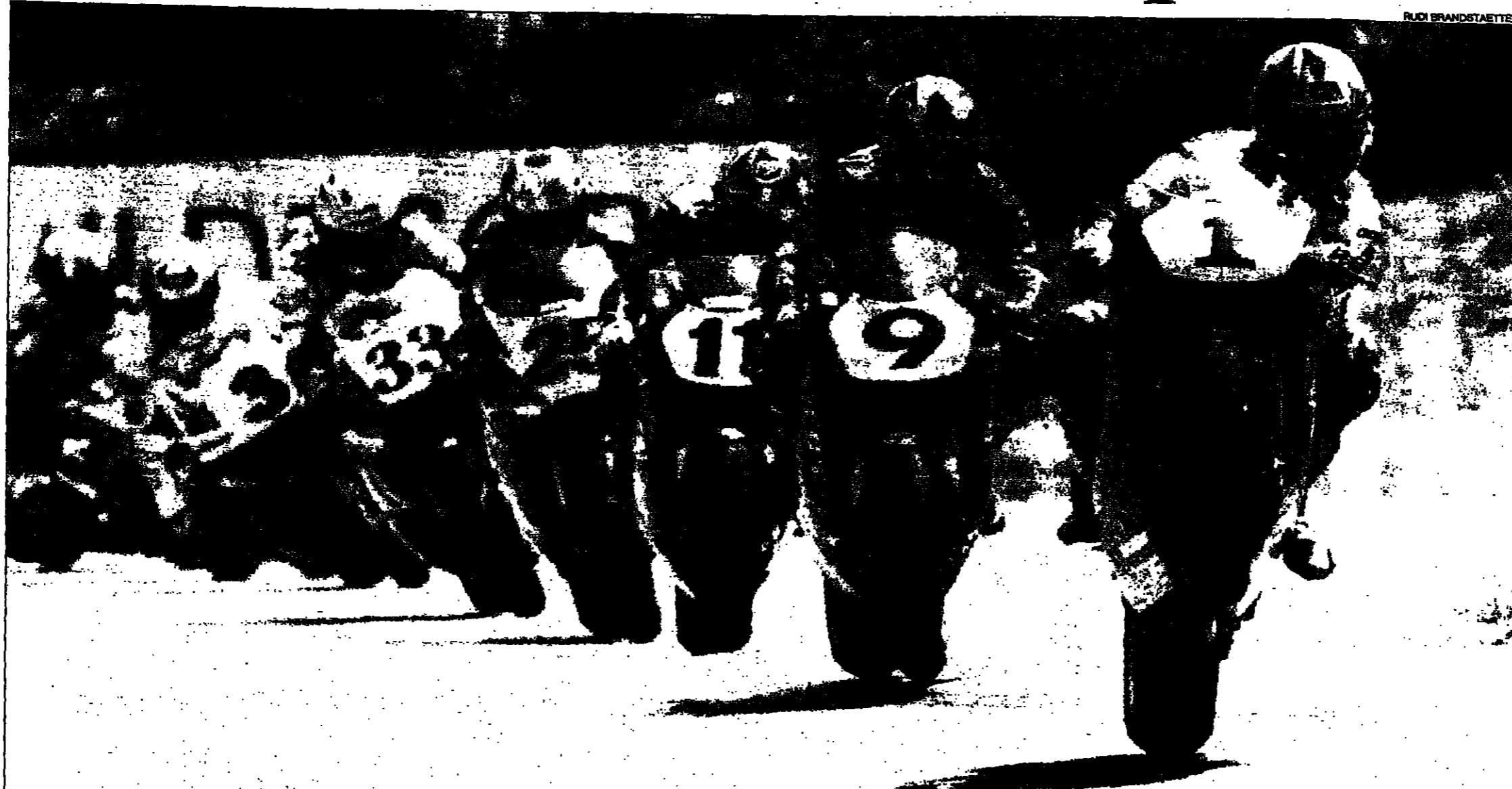
A40 Cheltenham,

Gloucestershire. Temporary

MAJOR ROADWORKS



Yorkshireman's champion return



Carl Fogarty on his Ducati, right, leads Fabrizio Provano of Italy and Australia's Troy Corser in the 1995 World Superbike Championships at the Salzburgring circuit in which Fogarty finished second overall

After his battle against cancer, James Whitham is back in the superbike saddle. John Naish talked to him

As the contenders line up on the grid at Donington next weekend for the British rounds of the World Superbike Championship, one rider will have special reason to be glad of the chance to race.

James Whitham, a 30-year-old Yorkshireman and hero of the local fans, is already putting his life's most crucial win behind him — his battle with cancer. Just two years ago, his championship-winning career was abruptly halted by a diagnosis of Hodgkin's disease.

But now he is back, contesting the World Superbike Championship, a race series rapidly growing in popularity with British racers because the bikes used are based on the machines that many fans ride themselves.

The racing roadbikes make the competition thrillingly close too, which is why Whitham's thoughts will not be on illness, but on turning his season round after a difficult start by taking full advantage of this, his local track.

The native of Halifax had begun to stamp his mark on motorcycle racing, including winning five British championships, when at the end of 1994 he realised he had lost a lot of weight. Over the next year he got progressively

weaker, until he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, a form of cancer.

"I had to stop racing because of the chemotherapy, which made my hair fall out and cocked my eyesight up," he remembers. "The treatment finished three weeks before Christmas, and I was back to racing in March. It only messed up one season."

In a remarkable comeback, he came a painfully close second in the British Superbike championship and was voted man of the year by readers of *Motorcycle News*.

Ask Whitham about his illness now and he says: "Oh, I'm forgetting about it" though he still has to go for regular hospital check-ups.

People around Whitham say

he lives to the full, with a wide range of interests that includes drumming in his own rock band. So why go back to the sport after such a close brush with mortality?

"Racing is my life; I started after I left school at 16," he says. "One thing the Hodgkin's brought home to me was that I had spent years doing a dangerous sport and never sustained any major injuries — and then was nearly finished off by something out of the blue."

But his attempt on the World Superbike champion-



ship this year has not gone well so far. After two meetings, in Australia and Italy, he is trailing in the points after crashing twice.

Donington, however, is where he aims to turn his season's fortunes. "It's my local track and I am keen to put on a good show," he says — and that means setting his sights on friend and fellow Yorkshireman, Carl Fogarty.

"Carl and I progressed through racing together, we live 45 minutes apart, our

partners get on well together and we hang out together on the tracks — but I would like to beat him next weekend."

Fogarty, however, will have other ideas. The Ducati team rider, who has twice won the World Superbike Championship, is currently 14 points behind series leader John Kocinski. Fogarty also regards Donington as his local track, and hopes it will give him the opportunity to catch up.

Indeed, there is no shortage of British riders for the Donington crowd to cheer on next weekend; among the others joining Whitham and Fogarty are reigning British Superbike champion Niall Mackenzie riding a Yamaha, his team-mate and young rising star, Chris Walker, ten-times Isle of Man TT-winner Steve Hislop, and Lancastrian Neil Hodgson.

And the British involvement does not stop there. Just as in Grand Prix motor racing,

where Britain is a centre of excellence, this country is a leading player in motorcycle race-building. Both Whitlam's Suzuki team and Castrol Honda are British-run. The contract for Suzuki's superbike effort was won by Hertsford-based Harris Performance against stiff competition from Japan and America. Harris have for decades been expert chassis-builders, first finding fame for creating state-of-the-art frames that turned unwieldy 1970s Japanese superbikes into true sportsters.

Now they are still at it, but are dedicating their skills to perfecting the already fine handling of Suzuki's road-going GSXR750. It's a tough battle, says team spokesman Paul Fowler: "This is our second year, and getting it right in racing takes time. We are up against teams that have been contesting the championship for a lot longer, but at the last round, at Misano our bike was the fastest at 174mph."

SUPERFACTS

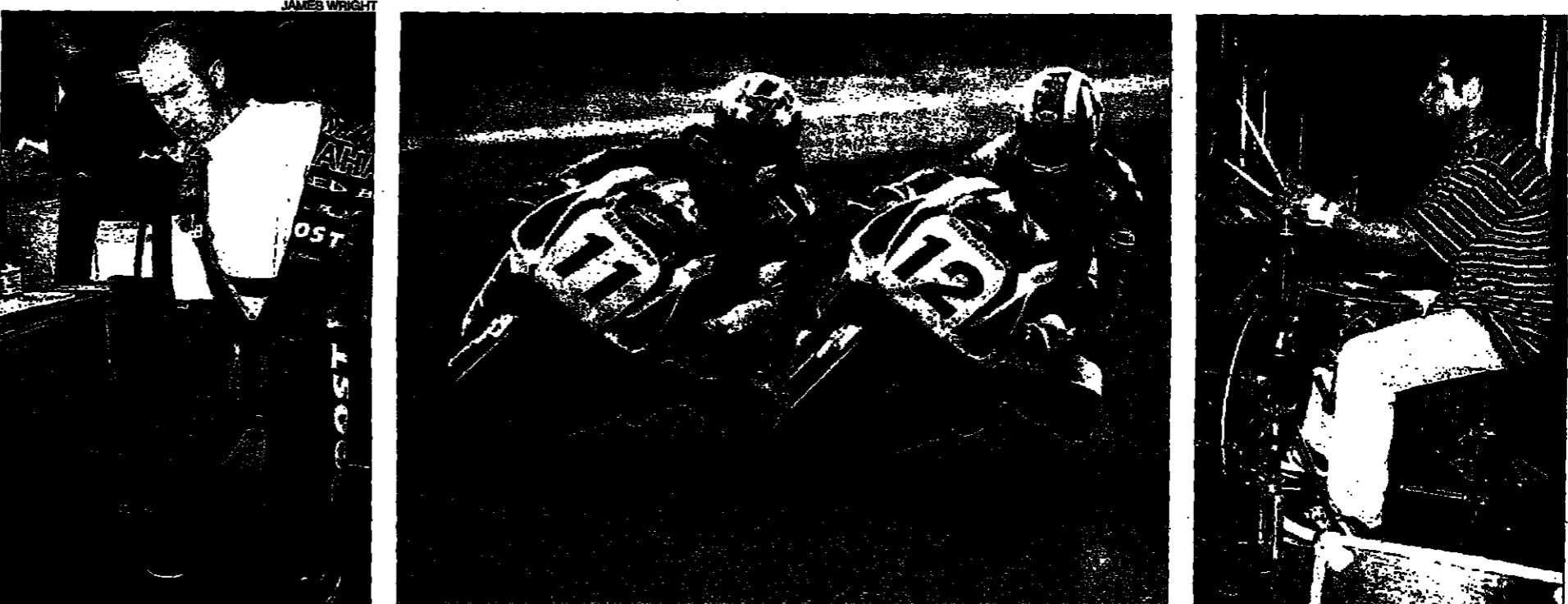
■ THE rapid growth in Superbike racing's popularity in Britain mirrors that of the British Touring Car Championship. Fans love to watch machines like the ones they own fighting it out on the track.

■ MAKERS have also become increasingly enamoured because it is proving a great way of selling their products.

■ WHILE fans get to watch machines like the Volvo S40s — being supported by CAR 97 in the BTCC series — bikers get to see top sportsbikes such as the Ducati 916, Suzuki GSXR750 and Honda RC45 taken to the limits.

■ NOT that they are completely standard: teams lighten and strengthen the engines, brace frames and swap suspensions for the latest race gear.

■ HONDA says it will spend £5.6 million on this year's World Superbike Championship, while Team Suzuki says: "Whatever it costs, the company will spend. If we asked for ten more engines, at £50,000 each, Suzuki would send them."



Whitham dons his leathers for the first time since his illness to repeat performances such as those against Mike Hale, centre, and drum up excitement as he does with his rock band

COMPETITION

■ PAIRS of tickets for next Sunday's race will go to the first five readers who write to: Times Competition, Donington Park, Derby, DE74 2RP, by Wednesday, identifying which county the track is in. (It's a trick question.)

Chevy serves a new slice of American pie

Vaughan Freeman finds heads turning as he tries out the fifth generation Corvette

United States soldiers stationed in Britain in the 1940s and early 1950s loved the nippy "limy" sportsters such as the MG, the Triumph TR2, Austin Healey 100 and the Jaguar XK120, which outperformed and out-sewed anything back home.

Returning GIs clamoured for a car that offered similar performance and driving joy. The response came 44 years ago when Chevrolet unveiled its first Corvette. Today Chevrolet, part of the General Motors/Vauxhall empire, is launching its fifth generation Corvette, built for the first time to meet European legislative and safety requirements, though for the UK it will still be left-hand drive.

What Chevrolet must do is identify the British customer for a car that retains all the blueberry pie American character so important to the legend. GM Europe marketing director Susan Doherty says: "For over 40 years the Corvette has been the embodiment of the American sports car and a dream car if there

ever was one. The Corvette is targeted at a serious sports enthusiast who is seeking a unique product providing him with image and styling but, more importantly, with performance."

The Corvette, she says, is aimed at a different customer from somebody who might buy a new BMW Z3, Porsche Boxster or Mercedes SLK. Owners are likely to be male, professional, aged 40 to 50, already won more than one car and who want a "high-performance sports car in the best American tradition".

What they will get is a car with head-swivelling looks, a hugely powerful engine and a glass-fibre body giving it a weight of just 1,470kg (Chevrolet's obsession with saving weight even sees balsa wood inserts in the floor where it works as a sound deadener).

Powered by the latest, all-aluminium incarnation of the Corvette's 5.7-litre small block V8, matched to a four-speed automatic gearbox (a six-speed manual arrives next year), the car flies to



Chevrolet Corvette: there will be no shortage of customers when the first 30 go on sale in Britain

60mph from a standstill in five seconds and a top speed of 175mph. But with the right foot off the accelerator it will burble along at around 30mph at 1,000rpm, and at a languid 2,000rpm will cruise at motorway speeds.

Massive disc brakes, anti-lock braking, traction control, wide magnesium wheels and variable sports/performance/touring suspension settings ensure the Corvette stays firmly on the road and stops instantly when required.

Inside, there is room for even the tallest driver and passenger. Unusually in a genuine high-performance sports car, there is also plenty of room in the back for bags and cases, and the pop-off roof is easy to remove and replace.

With the engine at the front, and

transmission mounted on the rear axle, weight is distributed 50:50 fore and aft which, together with an exceptionally stiff chassis, makes the car very well balanced, although on rough or poorly surfaced roads, the penalty is paid with rattling teeth and a tendency for the front wheels to skip fractionally through fast corners.

The Corvette features run-flat tyres that allow it to travel 200 miles on a puncture, and tyre pressure transmitters linked to the dashboard display warn of a flat or a slow leak.

Initially only 30 Corvettes will be available in Britain when sales start in late summer with 250 to Europe in total, so that whatever the price tag turns out to be, it is certain to sell out.

Chevrolet Corvette

BODY: Two-door, two-seat with removable hard top. Engine: 5.7-litre V8 producing 345bhp at 5,600rpm driving rear wheel through four-speed automatic gearbox.

Performance: 0-60mph in 5 seconds, top speed 175mph. Economy: 17mpg in town, 25mpg touring.

Equipment: Traction control, power steering, anti-lock braking, tyre pressure sensors, electric windows and seat controls.

Price: £35,000-£45,000. On sale late summer.



Born in the USA: five generations of an all-American legend

NAMED for a small, fast naval escort warship, the first Corvette was launched in 1953 with its now trademark but then revolutionary glass-fibre body, and a 3.8-litre six cylinder 150bhp engine.

Though stylish, the Corvette drew complaints about its lack of performance, and two years later a V8 engine, in 4.3-litre, 195bhp guise.

The classic 1957 Corvette with fuel injection was followed in 1958 with another restyle featuring double headlights, shark's mouth grille and lashings of chrome. In 1963 came the legendary Sting Ray with its split rear window, retractable headlights and innovative independent rear suspension. It also featured a 360bhp V8 that made the Sting Ray Corvette the fastest accelerating sports car in the world at the time. The "Coke bottle", with its pinched waist and flared wings, was another design icon as the third generation Corvette in 1968.

During the 1960s and 1970s cheap petrol saw the car's engines swell, peaking with a monstrous 7.4 litre unit. The world energy crisis saw the engine scale down, at least in US terms, to the more modest 5.7 litres of today, and in 1983 came the fourth-generation Corvette, only now being superseded by the latest model.

In 1990 came what many consider the definitive collector's Corvette, the ZR-1 incarnation, with a totally redesigned 32-valve 5.7 litre V8 with 375bhp and a top speed of almost 190mph. In 1992 Chevrolet built its millionth Corvette.

SATURDAY APRIL 26 1997

'The Beer family has probably forgotten more than most MG dealers will ever know'

Eve-Ann Prentice visits a village garage that is the centre of a classic marque's history from start to finish

The fading photograph on the wall of Sydney Beer's family garage shows former world champion Phil Hill at the steering wheel of Beer's single-seater MG K3 at Donington Park in 1960 while a younger, lither Beer stands gesturing alongside.

"I was quicker than him in those days," the now 79-year-old says wryly.

Sydney and his son, Malcolm, own what appears at first sight to be a small picturesque garage in the chocolate-box village of Houghton, near St Ives, Cambridgeshire which carries out MOTs and happens to have one or two MGs scattered about the forecourt.

In fact, they are custodians of probably the most comprehensive private collection of MG cars and memorabilia in Britain, if not the world. And now they plan to open an MG museum at the former RAF base at nearby Alconbury, complete with a workshop using original machinery, facilities for teaching the young about driving, seminars and films from MG's archives.

The enterprise even has the oblique backing of John Major, vice-president of Peterborough Motor Club which supports the museum scheme. The MG Car Club is also enthusiastic about the plan, which is now waiting for the local authority to act.

Sydney Beer wants to be sure no one thinks he is boasting when he says he was faster than Hill. "That was to be expected, it was my car, I won about 150 races in my time and I suppose I got to about 130mph but Hill was just doing a comparison check for an American magazine, not racing flat out."

The Beers' garage and the house behind it are crammed with laurels and cups to remind them of their racing victories (at 49, Malcolm already has twice as many wins under his belt as his father). But the deeper you go into the recesses of the house, the more Sydney's links with the MG become apparent. For Sydney was a close friend and confidant of John Thorneley, the company's managing director through its boom years, and now Sydney owns Thorneley's old desk, meticulously handwritten ledgers and office furniture dating from the era of Cecil Kimber, MG's founder, along with a multitude of other equipment and original machinery which he wants to put in the museum.

The MG Motor Car Museum would include the Beer family's collection of 60 or so cars, with models ranging from the beginnings at Oxford to the closure at Abingdon in 1980. "When the factory was closed we bought a lot of the stuff," says Sydney. All the early types of racing car are



Sydney Beer, left, and Malcolm with part of their unique MG collection, including a 1930 18/80 MK2, left, the 1961 Jacobs Midget Sydney used to race and the MGB GT V8 in which Malcolm competes



A glorious past in a Cambridgeshire garage: from left, a 1925 Bullnose 14/28, the famous six-sided logo, and some of the Beers' victory laurels, which Malcolm's daughter Heather may one day add to

represented and engines from the earliest to the O series. The only crash-tested MG to escape the crusher has also found sanctuary with the Beers.

Most of the collection is in storage, but two venerable examples are given house room at the garage: a 1925 14/28 Bullnose, which has been in the family for 25 years, and a 1929 18/80 Mark II. Out on the forecourt, Malcolm's white 1974 MGB GT V8 which

decided how the former RAF site at Alconbury will be developed as a whole. "There is very strong support from the district council," says Tony Davies, the council's head of leisure services.

Sydney Beer is quietly scathing about modern racing and hopes the museum will transmit some of what he sees as his generation's more affectionate attitude towards the sport to today's teenagers. He plans to hold courses to teach the

young "roadcraft" and "enable

young people to develop inter-

ests around motor cars, per-

haps reducing the incidence of

joy-riding and other offences.

I t's the person with the most bullshit and bounce, the idiots with tons of money who make it to the top in motor racing nowadays," he says with a wink. "I think Damon Hill's a damned good chap, though."

A workshop using old ma-

chinery will be set up at the

museum, to undertake old-

fashioned techniques such as

white metalling and fine

boring.

"The Beer family has proba-

bly forgotten more than most

MG dealers will ever know in

a lifetime," said one customer

visiting the garage for an MoT

for an aged Jaguar.

Both father and son showed

a talent for the extraordinary

from the earliest days of their

driving careers. Sydney

passed his test just nine days

after the test was first intro-

duced in 1935, while Malcolm

passed on his seventeenth

birthday. Malcolm's precc-

ious aptitude for winning

came just two days later.

"After Malcolm passed his

test on the Friday, we went to

get him a racing licence from

the RAC in Belgrave Square,"

says Sydney. "We entered him

for a historic race meeting at

Brands Hatch on the Sunday

and he won the lap record in a Q Type MG."

Now Malcolm's children, Adrian, 14, and Heather, nearly 15, have had their first taste of go-karting and a horse-riding. Heather has already shown a taste for following in the family racing tradition.

Sydney gazes proudly again at the picture of himself with Hill: "He tried lots of cars that day, but he liked mine best of all."



Expert advice: Sydney Beer with American racing ace Phil Hill in a MG K3 at Donington Park in 1980



Sydney and Malcolm with Adrian Beer in a R type MG and Sydney's MGB GTV8 at Silverstone in 1994

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96N 320i Tour Medora Violet, R/Rails, 13K	£22,995
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CARMART: YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S NEW AND WHAT'S USED ON THE FORECOURTS

SPARE PARTS

■ NEW MODELS from Citroën and Nissan will be launched at the Fleet Motor Show which runs from Tuesday to Friday at Silverstone. Citroën will be showing off its 2.1-litre turbodiesel and 3-litre V6 versions of the Xantia to the public for the first time and Nissan will have its Primera GT available for test drives. Fleetlease will have a simulator on which visitors can test their driving skills. More than 140 companies will be represented from leasing specialists to tyre fitters, including many of the main manufacturers and a number of firms marketing alternative-fuel vehicles. Information 081-390 0203.

AA DRIVERS can easily save an average of £150 per year by shopping around for insurance, according to the latest British Insurance Premium Index from the AA. The survey confirms the upward trend in premiums that has been apparent since the initial impact of "direct" insurers, which forced all-round reductions, had worn off. The rise has been compounded by the increase in Insurance Premium Tax. The average comprehensive premium at £381.20 is up 3.9 per cent over the quarter while the average non-comprehensive — frequently taken by less experienced drivers — is £385.36, up 3.5 per cent.

■ THE diesel-engined Shogun is for many, the best all-round four-wheel-drive car on the market, writes Vaughan Freeman.

Excellent off-road, room for up to seven people, with plenty of creature comforts and good on-road too, the Shogun provides keen competition to established four-wheel drive rivals from Land Rover, reports CAP Back Book.

On top of which, since the 1980s the Shogun has consistently kept its second-hand values better than any other 4x4, a major plus point when it comes to selling the car on, and

Cross-country hero and city slicker

Alan Cops takes the Jeep Laredo to town

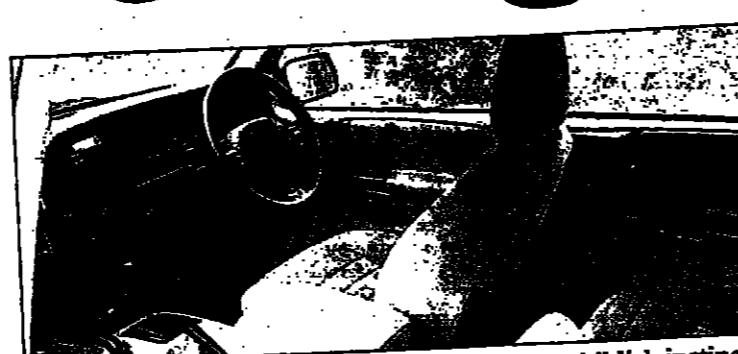
ROAD TEST

When Chrysler introduced the Grand Cherokee, the upmarket version of the car that has done so much to re-establish the company's presence in Britain, just over a year ago, I had the chance to test it off the road.

The leather, wood, cruise control and air-conditioning seemed irrelevant. It was just immense fun to take this big four-wheel-beast over a specially-constructed course on the edge of Snowdonia. Negotiating a rock-strewn stream bed, ploughing door-handle deep along a muddy ditch or climbing up a loose-surfaced one-in-four slope with a blind hump and small lake over the top seemed the natural thing to do in a vehicle bearing the name "Jeep".

I was impressed with the ease and agility with which the large vehicle overcame all these obstacles even in my comparatively inexperienced hands. I was also impressed by the price; at just under £30,000, it was more than £5,000 cheaper than the cheapest Range Rover — a real challenge to that British champion.

But the fact is that Grand Cherokee and Range Rover alike, very few of these big off-roaders ever get near a muddy field. So when Chrysler introduced the latest version, the Laredo, which knocks a further £3,000 off that price, I decided to use it like most owners in a way that I've always rather disapproved of: I took



Jeep Laredo: the urban appeal may really be a childish instinct

it on the school (or rather the playground) run.

If you've ever wondered why so many otherwise rational parents — as likely to rage about congestion from any other source as the rest of us — choose to clog up residential suburbs by ferrying their offspring in vehicles more suited to crossing moorland, the answer is simple. It's not them who do the choosing, it's the children. Once a child has experienced the joys of being perched up in the seats of a 4WD, gazing over the surrounding traffic like a junior member of the nobility surveying a

country estate, it's difficult to get them back into an ordinary car.

There is, of course, an obvious advantage to the driver in being able to see over the traffic, but a lot of the urban appeal of these vehicles may lie in the same childish instinct.

That said, this vehicle has a lot more than mere height going for it. Air-conditioning and cruise control are still standard, as are power steering anti-lock brakes, twin airbags and remote central locking, although I didn't like the wood-effect trim, which struck me as being quite

JEEP LAREDO

Engine: 2.5-litre four-cylinder turbo-diesel with 114bhp at 3,900 rpm or 4-litre six-cylinder petrol with 174bhp at 4,600rpm.

Transmission: Five-speed manual with part-time 4WD or four-speed automatic with full-time 4WD.

Performance: 0-60mph in 13.9 seconds (9.9 petrol). Max speed 97mph (112mph).

Economy: Urban 23mpg (13mpg); extra-urban 36 (23.5); combined cycle 29.7 (18.2).

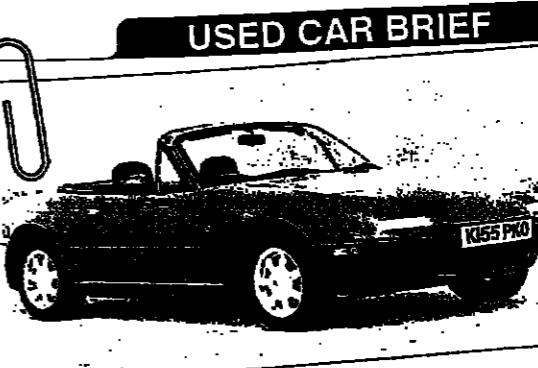
Equipment: Power steering, ABS, twin airbags, remote central locking, alarm/immobiliser, air-conditioning, electric windows and mirrors, cruise control, integral roof rack.

Price: £26,495 on the road.

unecessary with practical cloth seats. The off-road ruggedness does nothing to hamper town driving and it is remarkably manoeuvrable in tight parking spaces.

The 2.5-litre diesel version I tried has a five-speed manual gear change and part-time four-wheel-drive, so for town use it behaves as a rear-wheel-drive car, a more economical arrangement than the permanent four-wheel-drive in the 4-litre petrol model.

Last year a Jeep Cherokee with the Italian-made 2.5-litre diesel drove 900 miles from Bologna to London on one tank of fuel, an average of 58.4mpg.



Mazda MX-5 Until the recent arrival of the MGF from Rover, the Mazda MX-5 had units of its own way as a relatively cheap four-wheel-drive two-seater sports car in the Lotus Elan mould. Indeed, Mazda make no bones that the MX-5 is a direct copy of the 80s Lotus classic. Launched in 1989, the MX-5 features pop-up headlights, 1.6 and 1.8 litre four-cylinders, and superb handling. Looks wonderful and soft-top is impressively weather resistant.

BAD NEWS: The interior can seem bare and spartan, and in true sports car tradition there is relatively little headroom. It's easy to see if there is any damp which means a leaking roof which could be costly (more than £500) to replace. Check too that headlamps do pop up as required, as problems or slight front body damage can cause them to stick or fail.

GOOD NEWS: Responsive engines, especially the 1.6, give great power, all-round disc brakes and alloy wheels, all make the MX-5 the sort of car used by drivers who love their cars and their driving. As a result most used examples should be in good condition.

LOOK FOR: 1.6-litre 130bhp car given greater power by the SE or 1.8S give the sort of comfort unheard of in more traditional two-door sports cars, including electric windows, power steering, leather trim, airbag, immobiliser for security and alloy wheels.

AVOID: Cars lacking power steering and air bags. The MX-5 is the sort of car bought and driven by enthusiasts who care for their car, so walk away from any car that looks tatty, is not cared for, or which is dented by untreated stone chips.

INSURANCE: Cover from AA Insurance (0800 447777) on a 1984 MX-5 costs £1,000.

55-year-old, full male or female, with no claims and living in Winchester, £216 a year

22-year-old male living in London with one year of claims bonus, pays £1,323 fully comprehensive, and a similar female pays £1,070.

REPLACEMENT PARTS: (prices include VAT) Clutch assembly £250; full exhaust £200; catalytic converter £250; rear damper £110; front brakepads £75; alternator £250; radiator £240; starter motor £130.

OVERALL: A red-hot April on route to Summer brings home the allure of open-top sportscar motoring. Best of all, the MX-5 benefits from a soft-top that is a dream to lower and raise and which is weather-proof, so should the Summer months prove typically British and wet, the motoring fun need not stop. A car that offers big motoring smiles.

FORECOURT

one the shrewd used car buyer should always consider. Depreciation is usually the biggest single cost in car ownership.

For a 1994 M-reg 2.8-litre turbo diesel five-door, expect to pay around £21,000, and up to £22,500 for the same car but with the Diamond Option Pack of extra equipment.

The Shogun is also mechanically robust and has a sound reputation for trouble-free ownership. Dealers

report that, unlike other British-built 4x4s, which come back again and again with faults and niggles, most Shoguns sold second-hand are problem-free.

Unusually for a 4x4 car, the Shogun is enjoyable to drive on Tarmac, which is, for most owners, where most of the driving is done, although the manual transmission is preferred over the automatic.

Certainly the strength of the name and its reputation is growing. As well as the popularity of second-hand models, Mitsubishi is selling more Shoguns new than ever.

■ AFTER the four-wheel-drive Ford Galaxy comes the all-wheel-drive Volkswagen Sharan VR6 Syncro. It's not that surprising, since the two vehicles are built in the same Spanish plant.

Volkswagen says the Syncro, which uses its much-acclaimed 174bhp VR6 engine, is an alternative for drivers of big off-roaders who don't really require the capacity to traverse the Pennine Way. With seven seats and four-speed automatic transmission as standard, the company says it will appeal to large families in rural

areas, farmers, vets and doctors. For high payload and towing abilities should also make it attractive to sailors and riders. Prices start at £25,172 on-the-road, with a three-year warranty.

MERCEDES

M3 EVO 3.2 Convertible 96(P)

Boston Green/light silver leather, sun roof, alarm CD 13,000 miles PSH excellent condition. £41,995 01732 849522 /0374 830479.

300CE-24v

A rare beautiful example, 1992. Paget Red, FMSH, 2 owners (Director of M.B.), 100,000 miles, 12 months MOT, 12 months tax, 12 months service history, A/C, Sports E/R, ABS, Twin A/B, E/W, ESTAB, G+ more. Other: 1992. 0171 7943570 or 0171 5833238.

230 CE

H reg, Dark Grey Metallic, Auto, sun roof, alloy, Service history, 80,000 miles, Super car. £13,500.

420 SL

Caravella automatic, 1987. Smoke Silver, 12,000 miles, Bonne metallic, grey cloth, stereo, 3rd b/r/best. Owner emigrating. £25,995. Tel: 01925 290422.

E200

96 Elegance, auto, cruise, 12,000 miles, Bonne metallic, grey cloth, stereo, 3rd b/r/best. Owner emigrating. £25,995. Tel: 01925 290422.

500SL

87E, Signal red, cream leather, sun roof, 37k miles, headlamp, 3rd b/r/best. FMSH, £24,995. Tel: 0181 545 7277-7270 (Daytime).

E200

Elegance, auto, black/cream, 14,000 miles, FMSH, 7 seats, SHA, w/air, E/S, Pioneer CD/Jack remote controls. £21,500. Tel: 01491 8216163.

E320

97, Auto, Black/Cream leather, 37k miles, headlamp, 3rd b/r/best. FMSH, 7 seats, SHA, w/air, E/S, Pioneer CD/Jack remote controls. £18,500. Tel: 0181 874 5433 /0836 273751.

380 SLC

1981, 65K, FMSH, 7 seats, SHA, electric mirrors, window, £24,775. Tel: 01268 750481.

SL500

Auto, Argento N, Full Silver, black & red leather interior, climate control, 12,000 miles, 12 months MOT, 12 months tax, 12 months service, 12 months road tax, 12 months FMSH, 265,000 miles, saving £7,000 on list price. Like new. Tel: 01978 823999.

E200

94L Mid blue grey cloth, 37k 7 seats walnut, E/S, FWSR, Stereo R alarm 1 owner £19,995. Tel: 0171 216 3949 (Day) 01206 870848 (Eve)

320SL

P reg, quick sale, 1 owner, £59,995. Tel: 0151 531 7388 mobile 0374 147147.

300SL

Red, cream interior, 1986, low mileage, excellent condition, service history. Tel: 01636 812353.

SL300

24, 91, white, black leather, auto 5 spoke alloys, lady owner, FMSH, red seats, the cleanest anywhere. £41,925. Tel: 0468 936 999.

E250

1994, white, FMSH, 7 seats, 12 months MOT, 12 months tax, 12 months service, 12 months road tax, 12 months FMSH, 21k miles, £17,900. Tel: 0171 706 4942.

300SL-24Valve

1994, White, Silver, Blue leather interior 41,000 miles, FMSH, 7 seats, 12 months MOT, 12 months tax, 12 months service, 12 months road tax, 12 months FMSH, 21k miles, £38,000. Tel: 01279 442220.

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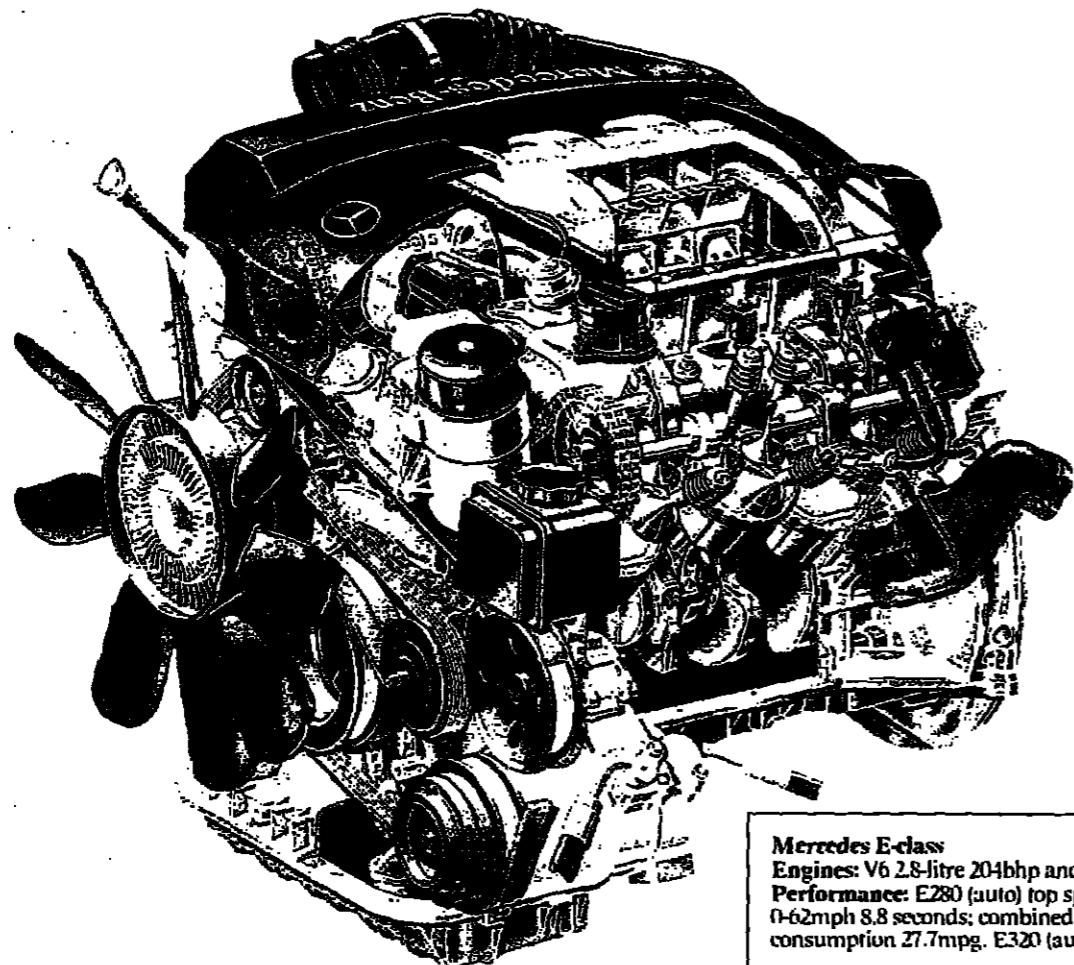
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SATURDAY APRIL 26 1997

CAR 97

9

Stuart Birch reports on a Mercedes system that could cut motorists' garage bills by up to 30 per cent



Mercedes E-class
Engines: V6 2.8-litre 204bhp and 3.2-litre 224bhp.
Performance: E280 (auto) top speed 143 mph,
0-62mph 8.8 seconds; combined fuel
consumption 27.7mpg. E320 (auto) top speed

Mercedes-Benz has introduced Active Service. But don't worry, that doesn't mean camouflage paintwork and a gun turret on the roof.

Mercedes' Active Service System is being introduced for its new V6 engines fitted initially to the luxurious E-class — and it could lead to phenomenally long oil change intervals. The system determines when an individual car's next service is due, based on information supplied by micro-computers which take account of oil levels and quality, temperatures, engine revs, speeds and loads, to which the power unit has been subjected, plus information from the gearbox.

BMW has had something similar since 1983, but its system is now based mainly on the number of engine starts, plus some other inputs. They use a series of green lights which extinguish as the service time approaches — typically 9,500 miles for a 5-series and 8,000 for a 3-series. Mercedes has a digital display on the dashboard warning that a service is due — although, being Mercedes, that warning will initially come up 1,800 miles in advance of the event!

The point of all this is to save customers' money. Fixed service intervals based only on mileage do not allow for specific use. A car that spends most of its life cruising steadily on motorways with engine revs and temperatures kept within relatively narrow parameters would require servicing less often.

Mercedes agrees: "Depending on driving styles, some owners can extend oil change intervals with the new V6 engine to as much as 18,600 miles — even longer."

Other manufacturers will look askance at such a figure and Mercedes is not pretending that it is the norm — but says it is possible and that average figures will not be that much less. E-class cars with the previous straight six-cylinder engine needed servicing every 9,000 miles. Now owners of a V6

Need a service? This engine is able to tell you

Mercedes should save about 30 per cent on engine service costs.

The new V6s are impressive in other ways. They are lightweight, efficient and environmentally clean. Initially available in 2.8 and 3.2-litre forms in E-class saloons and estates, they will also be used in other model ranges.

They feature three valves per cylinder instead of four — which Mercedes says in a V6 is an aid to cleaner emissions — and there is enough space for a second spark plug which is also good news for emissions. The engines are said to offer a 13 per cent fuel consumption improvement compared to the previous in-line sizes.

Linked to five-speed automatic gearboxes, they give the level of quiet, smooth response expected of a big Mercedes saloon, although step could sometimes be a shade jerky. Just caused by my big right foot? Possibly, but I don't think so.

The new V6 E280 and E320, like other E-class models (and eventually all Mercedes cars), get brake assist, already described by *Car 97*.

which gives added stopping power in full emergency braking.

Other upgrades in standard equipment (the car cost about 3 per cent more than the old ones, with the E280 Classic starting at £33,480) include air-conditioning, with sunroof an option, a more advanced traction skid control and a system to prevent the passenger airbag deploying if a child seat is being used. Mercedes quite rightly says that children should use a proper seat in the rear of the car.

The traditional ignition key is replaced by an electronic unit. It is said that an average computer would take 90 years to throw up the correct code.

There is one other change to the standard E-class specification as well: a radio/cassette is fitted, with a choice of Sony or Blaupunkt. Their value can be used to offset still higher specification equipment. In the past, Mercedes (and BMW) argued long and hard that these should be optional extras to individual customer choice — questionable when even most of the cheapest cars on the market had a radio. Now, suddenly but belatedly, those well-argued arguments have evaporated; both companies are entering the real world of customer in-car entertainment expectations.

And within months all Mercedes models will come with a radio as standard — a revelation that will bring a knowing smile to the faces of car sales staff everywhere.

French power full steam ahead

**Ian Morton salutes the arrival of
Citroën's new Xantia flagship**

Engines of V6 configuration are modish. Last year British motorists bought 25,000 cars with such units. Even in the popular medium ranges, they have become significant — 5 per cent of Mondeos and 10 per cent of Vectras are sold with these powerful and prestigious units.

Now Citroën is to join the fray. A new Xantia V6 flagship sets sail soon into the UK market, and it has a bigger gun than its mainstream target rivals in the battle for downsizing executive and family customers. While the Ford and Vauxhall pack 2.5 litres apiece, the Xantia carries 3.0

litres. It is also an automatic. So are Mondeo and Vectra outgunned? With manual transmission they have a quicker rate of fire, and the Vectra is cheaper, but in the automatic specification their performance fades and Xantia clearly wins the day, getting from 0-60mph in 8.5 seconds and rounding out at 140mph. According to manufacturers' data, the Mondeo takes 10 seconds and makes 130mph, while the Vectra needs 9 seconds and just holds its own with 141 mph. The Citroën certainly triumphs on price — £21,995 when it arrives here in June, against the current top-version Mondeo automatic at £23,555 and Vectra at £22,430.

This 60-degree all-alloy V6 engine delivers 194bhp at 5,500rpm, but most importantly for instant power flow releasing most of its 197lb ft of torque at only 2,000rpm. What makes it even more impressive is how the automatic transmission handles this output. An advanced "adaptive" gearbox

with computer control, it senses the engine management system, the style or mood of the driver (who can manually select normal, sporty or winter ratings), the weight of extra passengers and luggage, and the road characteristics, then chooses one of a dozen available shift patterns to suit the moment.

Neither is the thunder of battle deafening. Even as it rushes up to its 6,500rpm deadline/cutout, the engine utters nothing more than a spirited snarl. No owner will be discouraged by mechanical noise from utilising this muscular unit to the full.

Fiercely capable perfor-

mance is matched by an able chassis. Though the V6 has yet to acquire Citroën's extraordinary "Activa" suspension (that will be offered later), its self-levelling Hydractive computer-controlled system serves with conspicuous gallantry, keeping the car flat in the close-run corners. The tyres grip impressively, a scuff and a squawk informing the driver when no man's land is close.

Ride on surface surfaces is

furnish without being harsh and if an undulating surface causes a succession of mild resonances in the interior as struts and springs compress, this is all part of the impression of being close to the terrain and in control of it.

Citroën Xantia V6
Engine: V6 3-litre 24-valve developing 194 bhp at 5,500rpm and 197lb ft of torque at 4,000rpm.

Transmission: Four-speed adaptive automatic with 83-channel computer, three modes and 12 shift patterns.

Performance: 0-60mph in 8.3 seconds, maximum speed 140mph.

Economy: Urban 16.4mpg, extra urban 33.6mpg, combined 24.4mpg.

Price: £21,995.



Citroën Xantia V6: spare, sinewy, balanced and eager

upholstery and of woodgrain do not subvert its character.

Other goodies — air-conditioning, cruise control, electric multi-adjustment of the front seats, twin airbags, six-speaker CD audio, electric windows all round, remote-control central locking, ABS brakes — sit equally naturally in such a dynamically capable car.

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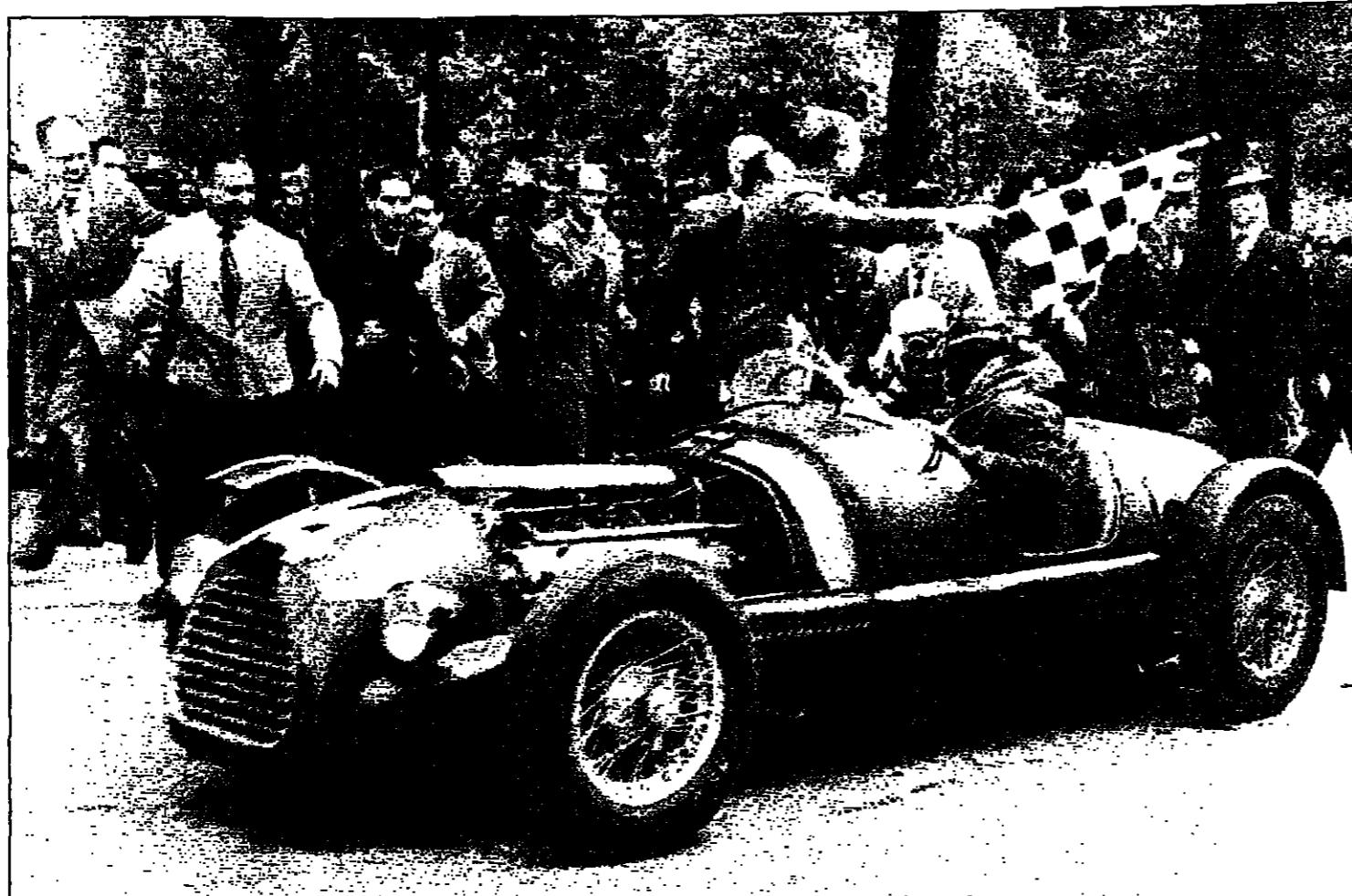
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A thousand miles of legend

Peter Miller
on 'the most
incredible
travelling
museum in the
racing world'



Count Aymo Maggi in 1927



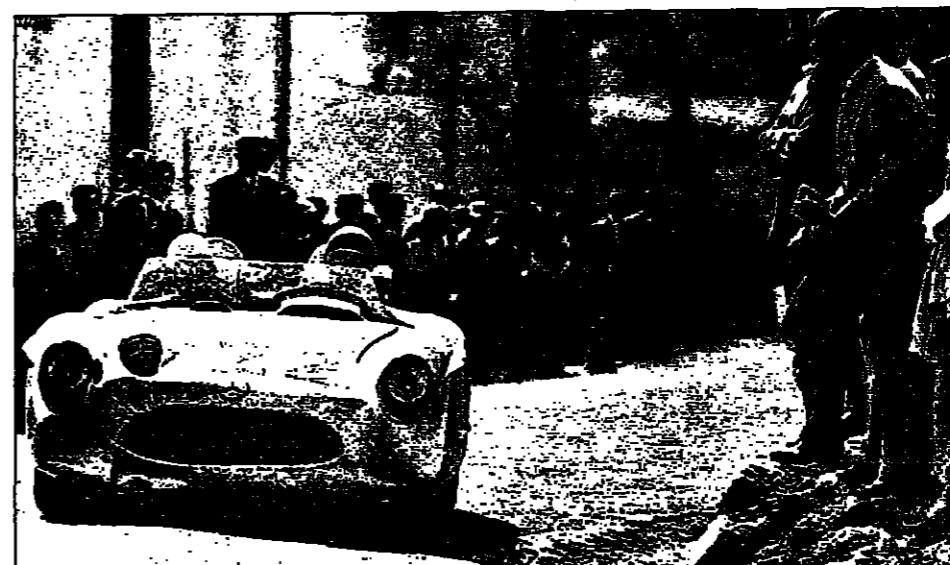
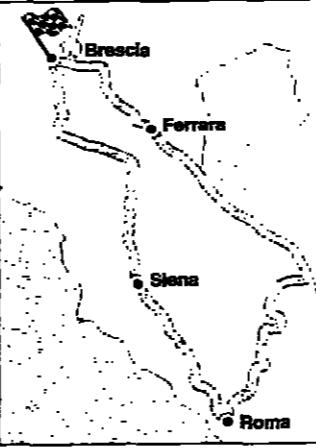
Nuvolari with Scipinelli in their Ferrari during the 1948 Mille Miglia, from which they were forced to retire when leading by 32 minutes



De Portago at his last control before the 1957 fatality at Guidizzolo



Mercedes racing manager Alfred Neubauer with Jenkinson and Moss



Moss and Jenkinson winning in 1955 at an average of nearly 99mph, a race record

A TIMES NEWSPAPERS COMPETITION

Play Fantasy Formula One



Prizes worth £40,000

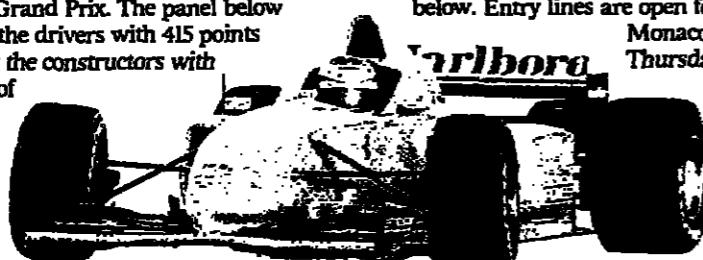


On the eve of tomorrow's race, the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola, we reprint the Fantasy Formula One scores for each of the selections after the Argentinian Grand Prix. The panel below shows Berger leading the drivers with 415 points and McLaren heading the constructors with 65 points. Full results of tomorrow's race will appear in Sport next Friday. To register to play our £40,000 Fantasy Formula One game, in association

with the Marlboro World Championship Team, just choose a team of six racing drivers and six constructors, three from each of the four groups listed in the panel below. Entry lines are open for registration for the Monaco Grand Prix until noon,

Thursday May 8. You can also check the position of your team(s) by using our checklist below.

• You can also play Fantasy Formula One with *The Sunday Times*



THE PRIZES
JACKPOT: The manager with the best team score on our Fantasy Formula One leaderboard after the final race of the season, the Portuguese Grand Prix at Estoril, on October 26, will win £25,000. Prizes of £10,000 and £5,000 will go to two runners-up.

INDIVIDUAL RACE WINNERS: The manager of the team with the most points in tomorrow's San Marino GP will win a VIP trip to the British GP. The runner-up will get a Sony PlayStation and Formula One game worth £50.

TO ENTER BY TELEPHONE Call our entry hotline on 0891 405 001 (+44 990 100 311 outside the UK). Calls last approximately seven minutes and must be made using a Touch-tone telephone. You will be asked to nominate your 12 two-digit selections in turn. The order in which you register your first three drivers will be your predictions for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd finishing places for the grands prix where bonus points apply.

You will then be asked to give your Fantasy Formula One team name, your own name, address, postcode and daytime telephone number. You will receive a 10-digit PIN number as confirmation of your entry.

TRANSFERS If you've already entered a team you can change up to four selections before the Monaco Grand Prix by calling 0891 555 994 (+44 990 100 394 ex UK) before noon on Thursday May 8. Your new team must comprise three selections from each of groups A, B, C and D. The first three selections you make will be deemed to be your prediction for the Monaco Grand Prix bonus points.

CHECK YOUR SCORE Check the scores and positions of your team(s) on 0891 554 648 (0044 990 100 348 ex UK) and tap in your 10-digit PIN number. The line currently carries all positions after the Argentinian GP and will be updated on Wednesday April 30 after the San Marino GP.

MAKE 3 SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THESE FOUR GROUPS

DRIVERS GROUP A		DRIVERS GROUP B	
01 D Hill	37 127 07 M Hakkinen	147 400	
02 M Schumacher	13 274 08 D Coulthard	7 273	
03 J Villeneuve	182 354 09 R Barrichello	36 113	
04 E Irvine	157 270 10 H.H. Frentzen	20 242	
05 J Alesi	127 291 11 J Herbert	133 274	
06 G Berger	143 415 12 M Salo	138 298	

CONSTRUCTORS GROUP C		CONSTRUCTORS GROUP D	
25 Williams	20 49	31 Arrows	-20 -23
26 Ferrari	15 52	32 Sauber	13 44
27 McLaren	12 65	33 Tyrrell	9 3
28 Benetton	21 59	34 Minardi	8 31
29 Jordan	14 3	35 Stewart	7 -23
30 Prost	-20 26	36 Lola	0 0

The first column of figures in light type after the names show the Fantasy Formula One Argentinian GP race scores, the second column the total competition points so far

FANTASY FORMULA ONE 24 HOUR ENTRYS LINE 0891 405 001

0891 calls cost 50p per minute (standard tariffs apply to +44 990 calls).

CHANGING TIMES

Scipinelli
Tazio Nuvolari with Scipinelli in their Ferrari during the 1948 Mille Miglia, from which they were forced to retire when leading by 32 minutes

Portago
De Portago at his last control before the 1957 fatality at Guidizzolo

Ickx
Grand prix driver Jacky Ickx, left, who hopes to compete again this year

Map
Map of the Mille Miglia route from Brescia to Rome via Ferrara and Siena

Moss and Jenkinson
Mercedes racing manager Alfred Neubauer with Jenkinson and Moss

1947
In 1947, the first post-war event, some of the roads were still mine and petrol and tyres were at a premium. So Count Maggi offered a free tank of petrol and five new tyres to all entrants. No fewer than 394 turned up for scrutineering to collect their rations. Yet when the time to start came only 155 were flagged away, the remainder heading happily back to all corners of Italy with fuel and tyres considered a luxury.

Then there was the incredible drive of Stirling Moss, accompanied by the bearded navigator Denis "Jenks" Jenkinson, who completed the 1,000 miles in a record 10 hours 7 minutes and 48 seconds in 1955 in their Mercedes-Benz 300SLR at nearly 99mph.

The accident in 1957 was exactly what the race directors had dreaded: the Spanish nobleman, the Marchese Alfonso "Fon" de Portago somersaulted his scarlet Ferrari into the crowds beside

1957
Eventually the suspension collapsed, with the chassis dragging on the ground and Nuvolari was forced to retire in the final stages at Reggio Emilia, despite a staggering lead of 32 minutes over the eventual winner, Clemente Biondetti. The inscription on Nuvolari's marble mausoleum at Mantova reads: "Now he motors faster on the highways in heaven."

1958
Biondetti had his own amazing record. At 18 he was penniless and made the money to buy his first race car by buying old bananas from the docks in Genoa and selling them to villagers in the mountains. He went on to win the race in 1938, 1947, 1948 and 1949 and died in 1949 and died a wealthy landowner.

1959
Biomed had his own amazing record. At 18 he was penniless and made the money to buy his first race car by buying old bananas from the docks in Genoa and selling them to villagers in the mountains. He went on to win the race in 1938, 1947, 1948 and 1949 and died in 1949 and died a wealthy landowner.

1960
Observers of the incident said that Portago's probable speed through the village was near to 180mph and he had passed within a couple of feet of some 1,000 young orphans in white suits and dresses seated at trestle tables enjoying their picnic spread. The Ferrari's left front tyre was showing the canvas breaker-strip and de Portago and the children were only separated by a rope barrier.

1961
When the children of Guidizzolo died in 1957, so too did the red "OM" — the celebrated Brescia-built Officine Meccaniche which finished 1.23 in 1927.

1962
The first car away on Thursday will be the red "OM" — the celebrated Brescia-built Officine Meccaniche which finished 1.23 in 1927.

1963
Even before the start, this year's event has made history. When entries officially closed on December 31, the organisers had received more than 800 applications offering an extraordinary selection of collector's cars from all over the world, including 180 from Germany, 62 from Great Britain, 52 from Switzerland, 20

1964
passed through and not found a short cut or two.

1965
A rally-type event was held in 1958, 1959 and 1961 in a rather desultory fashion and then the Mille Miglia fell into obscurity. It was relaunched in 1977 thanks to the vision of the present organising committee headed by Costantino Franchi and is now recognised as a most prestigious event for veteran and historic sports and touring cars.

1966
The first car away on Thursday will be the red "OM" — the celebrated Brescia-built Officine Meccaniche which finished 1.23 in 1927.

1967
Even before the start, this year's event has made history. When entries officially closed on December 31, the organisers had received more than 800 applications offering an extraordinary selection of collector's cars from all over the world, including 180 from Germany, 62 from Great Britain, 52 from Switzerland, 20

1968
from Argentina and 19 from Japan. For safety reasons, entries have been limited to 350 starters and the event is now justly entitled "the most incredible travelling museum in the world".

1969
After a three-hour run to Ferrara for a brief night stop, the 700 drivers face the next day's stage from Ferrara to Rome for another night's stop before the 15-hour drive back to Brescia. They can expect heavy rain, fog and snow and ice over the mountains of central Italy making the roads just as hazardous as they sometimes were for the original racers. There are numerous timed sections and hill-climbs where times are recorded to one-hundredth of a second using hand-held stopwatches or chronometers only, with penalty points being amassed for early or late arrival. Electronic navigation aids are forbidden, after "cheating" by certain works-sponsored entries in their determination to win.

1970
The road at the exit of the village of Guidizzolo just 25 miles from the finish, killing himself, his American journalist passenger, Ed Nelson, and 10 spectators, including several children.

1971
Observers of the incident said that Portago's probable speed through the village was near to 180mph and he had passed within a couple of feet of some 1,000 young orphans in white suits and dresses seated at trestle tables enjoying their picnic spread. The Ferrari's left front tyre was showing the canvas breaker-strip and de Portago and the children were only separated by a rope barrier.

1972
When the children of Guidizzolo died in 1957, so too did the red "OM" — the celebrated Brescia-built Officine Meccaniche which finished 1.23 in 1927.

1973
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1974
Even before the start, this year's event has made history. When entries officially closed on December 31, the organisers had received more than 800 applications offering an extraordinary selection of collector's cars from all over the world, including 180 from Germany, 62 from Great Britain, 52 from Switzerland, 20

1975
from Argentina and 19 from Japan. For safety reasons, entries have been limited to 350 starters and the event is now justly entitled "the most incredible travelling museum in the world".

1976
Things are not going entirely to plan for TWR Volvo S40 Racing, the team we are following this season. Alain Menu, in his Renault Laguna prepared by Williams, is still the man to beat, winning both rounds at Silverstone last weekend, but Rickard Rydell is second in the championship and looks stronger with each race. Kelvin Burt is fourth in the standings.

1977
Pedro warmed to his new company car on his first outing after it was delivered to him this week at Silverstone, where he was testing his

Volvo C70 here, he has also been given one to go the shops back home in Monaco, where presumably he has to tune in his satellite dish to watch rounds of the touring cars championship.

1978
Things are not going entirely to plan for TWR Volvo S40 Racing, the team we are following this season. Alain Menu, in his Renault Laguna prepared by Williams, is still the man to beat, winning both rounds at Silverstone last weekend, but Rickard Rydell is second in the championship and looks stronger with each race. Kelvin Burt is fourth in the standings.

1979
But the S40 is still a relatively new car and each race brings an improvement, with Rydell and Burt hoping to reel in the Renault. Next round is on May 4 and 5 at Thruxton.

Racing after the high-speed Saint

Kevin Eason on

who's driving

the Volvo C70



Diniz and Volvo: "I think I will enjoy driving it very much"

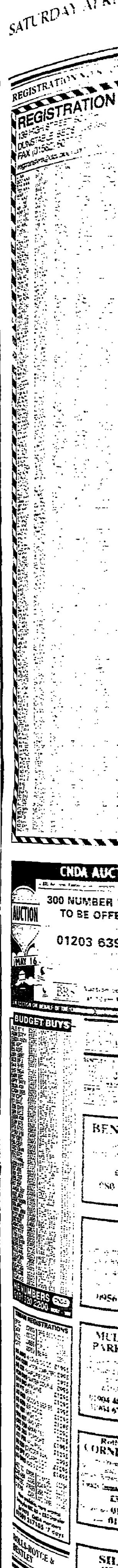
cars series. Even if you don't spot Diniz or Hill in theirs, you will be able to see the C70 starring with Val Kilmer at the movies in *The Saint*.

The C70s are the first in this country and will sharpen Volvo's new image as a maker of sporty cars, an image honed by TWR which has made Volvo successful in the touring

cars series.

It handles well and there is no turbo lag. The engine is also very smooth. I think I will enjoy driving it very much."

Son of a multi-millionaire supermarket magnate in Brazil, Pedro not only has a



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SATURDAY APRIL 26 1997

Mary Spillane, the American who has been colour-coding Britain's politicians, talks to Andrew Pierce

PETER TREVOR

'Sister Veronica was a demon nun behind the wheel'

Judging by the appearance of most of the politicians paraded in front of the television cameras, you might think few had been given the benefit of the advice of Mary Spillane, one of Britain's leading image consultants. But in fact she has worked for all the major political parties except Plaid Cymru.

Ms Spillane was one of the first to set up a company giving advice to career women on their appearance. Born outside Boston, she worked for both Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan as a crisis manager before coming to Britain in 1981.

On the three party leaders she believes that Tony Blair's dress sense is terrific: "He is a modern man. His image is good."

John Major's image is more polished than five years ago. "But it would be wonderful to see him dress more casually."

She picks Paddy Ashdown as the best of the three. "He could wear a bin liner and still look good. He has been blessed because the election has been called in spring. It has made their colour, yellow, look good."

But Ashdown's fellow Lib Dem MPs were told to clean up their act by brushing their hair, buying new ties, and washing their shirts. Ms

STEERING COLUMN

Spillane met 25 MPs for the dressing down. Simon Hughes, who is defending Bermondsey and Southwark, was advised to wash his shirts more often and women candidates were told to wear jackets with square shoulders. Bright colours were in vogue for the men.

Whether her advice will make much impact on polling day remains to be seen.

How did you first learn to drive?

With Sister Veronica. Yes, a nun, at the Academy of the Holy Angels at the age of 16. She was a demon behind the wheel and gave us detention if we swore when we got things wrong.

What was your first car?

The same make I am driving today and have done so for almost 30 years — a VW. Then it was a bug. I just get a new one every two or three years.

What car do you drive now, and why?

A Golf GTI.

Do you like driving?

Only in America, where I hire Lincolns to cruise in. Britain is not a cruising country. The roads are too cramped.

What is your most hated car?

Ones with short exhaust systems that choke the rest of us. In America you can make a citizen's arrest on such drivers, who are considered more anti-social than smokers.

What is your dream car?

I don't dream about cars. But I would not turn down a '67 Thunderbird Convertible. White with matching leather interiors, of course.

What is your worst habit in the car?

Putting on lipstick while I am driving and changing gears.

What is the most unusual thing you have done in your car?

Like everyone, I have slept in them, had rained-out picnics in them, and been a naughty girl (occasionally). But, like most women, my car has

SITTING EXPENSIVE DESIGN

The technique has already been used by Ford to design the door module, fuel tank placement and door latch on a future car, the drive-line assembly on a second car, and the instrument panel on a light truck. It will be utilised on the development of all critical manufacturing processes for 2000 and beyond.

In the past such problems have emerged only after the carmaker had built prototypes and guinea-pig workers had tried to assemble them, often finding the processes difficult or humanly impossible, necessi-

tating expensive design revisions. The technique has already been used by Ford to design the door module, fuel tank placement and door latch on a future car, the drive-line assembly on a second car, and the instrument panel on a light truck. It will be utilised on the development of all critical manufacturing processes for 2000 and beyond.

These computer simulations are a big help in Ford's drive to bring new cars and trucks to market faster," he says. "Assembly techniques can now be developed at the same time as components are designed. Both are designed simultaneously on computer, reducing reliance on expensive prototypes early in the product development process."

Because manufacturing engineers work alongside product design engineers and both use the same computer images of vehicle components and facilities, design changes can be made immediately and easily to improve ease of assembly. This high-tech teamwork is made possible through

the worldwide implementation of Ford's new integrated computer-aided design, engineering, manufacturing and product information management system, known as CSP, says Hettie.

"In the past, product design engineers would design a component, a prototype part would be made and then manufacturing engineers and hourly product specialists would work to make the assembly process feasible," says Mark Phillips, manufacturing systems supervisor in Ford's paint and final assembly engineering division.

"Making engineering changes for ease of assembly was an expensive project. Now they can be made sooner, quicker and with the input of the manufacturing staff who have to build the vehicle, without relying entirely on expensive prototypes."



Ford vision: if it's virtually correct, it will work in reality

The new car's great in theory, but will the factory be able to build it?

Factory workers are being replaced by computer images in a Ford plan to save the company £125 million a year worldwide.

Ford is to use computer-generated, "virtual factory" and "virtual worker" techniques to replace vehicle prototypes and human skills in the design stage. The concept will mean a 20 per cent reduction in the number of design changes that have to be introduced during the late development stages to make vehicles easier to build.

Ian Morton looks at how Ford is screening in the human condition

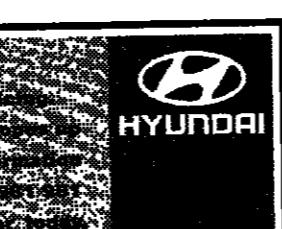
Ford claims to be the first car manufacturer to use computer simulations to design its vehicle final assembly processes on a global basis. If the concept goes into general use, it will slice an estimated £1.5 billion off carmakers' costs.

The virtual factory includes computer-simulated employees who test proposed assembly line processes against the

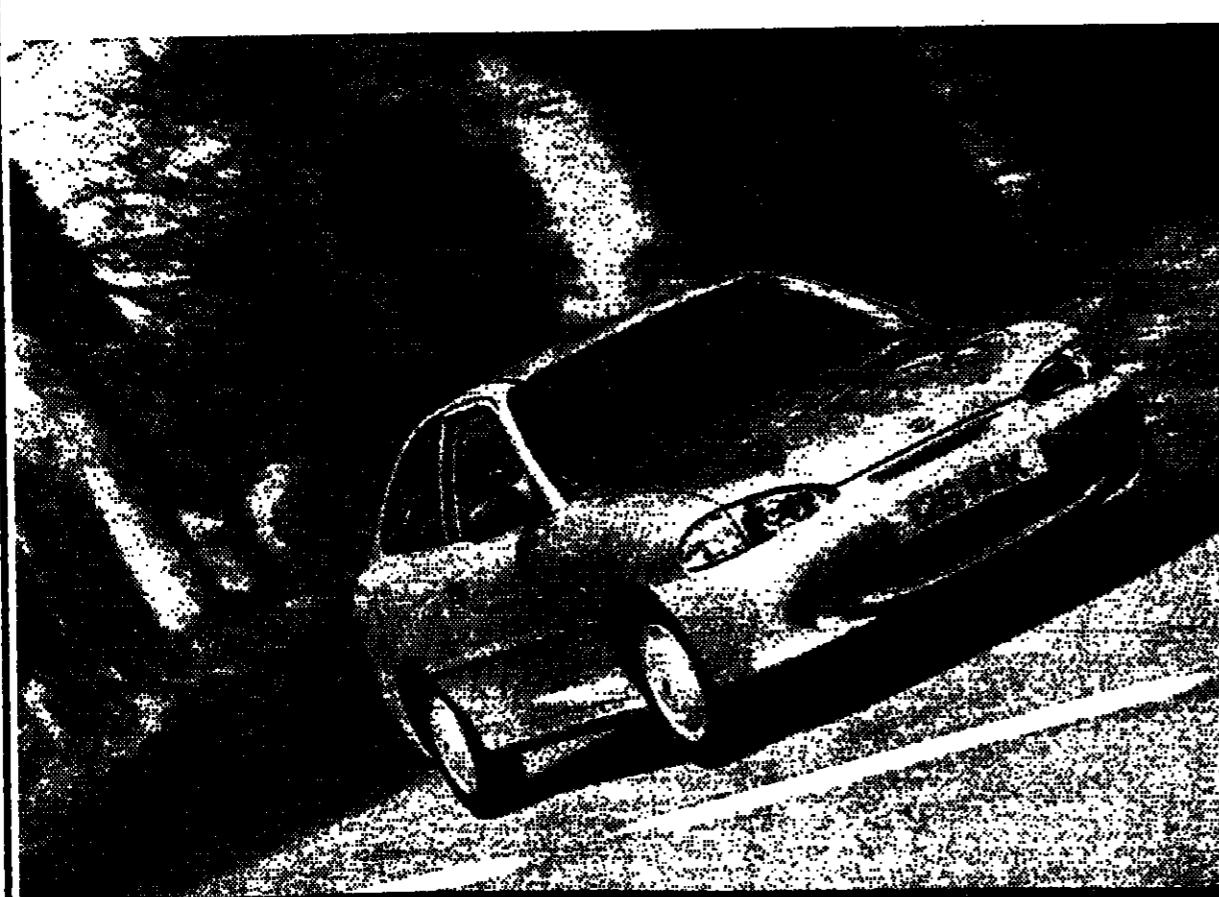
human shape and its field of movement. Men and women of different sizes can be simulated to make sure there are no ergonomic problems.

In the past such problems have emerged only after the carmaker had built prototypes and guinea-pig workers had

tried to assemble them, often finding the processes difficult or humanly impossible, necessi-



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Daewoo aims for the top ten

Tony Lewis in Seoul reports on the new Korean trio

PROOF, if proof was needed, of the burgeoning ambition of Daewoo, the Korean car maker, has been provided by the company's plans to launch three new models simultaneously in Europe by the end of this year. Daewoo has already thrust the trio of new cars on to its domestic market as it served notice of the seriousness of its intentions to win a place in the world's top ten carmakers' league by the end of the decade.

Named Lanos, Nubira and Leganza, they form the second wave of Daewoo exports, corporate virility symbols after 2½ years selling the Nexia and Espero in the UK, fundamentally tarted up Astra and US Cavaliers, respectively.

Lanos (in hatchback and saloon forms) will replace the Nexia, although slightly smaller and the Nubira saloon, an incremental estate, will eclipse the Espero, again with marginally less bulky external dimensions.

But the Leganza, in saloon-only format, moves Daewoo up into previously uncharted territory, pitched against Ford's Mondeo, Vauxhall's Vectra and the Peugeot 406. This new flagship offering should be heavily specified, complete with leather and wood, air-conditioning and CD sound system. By previous Daewoo standards it is understated, nothing garish or over-emphasized. The interior majors on "soft feel" surfaces, avoiding previous tacky efforts.

Daewoo's UK research and



Daewoo in production: with high customer satisfaction, the target is to overtake Hyundai

trio underwent testing at the Motor Industry Research Association's Midlands test track.

As a result, they display European ride and handling virtues, firm enough on corners but supple over uneven surfaces. It is under the bonnet where the brave new Daewoos require most attention, all the engines, particularly the 2-litre being harsh and lacking flexibility, but new power units are promised by 1999, from 1.3-litres upwards.

They are badly needed in an area where Ford, Vauxhall, Peugeot and the Japanese marques take engine refinement as read. Equally, the automatic transmission on the 2-litre Nubira hunts and shunts, generating annoying transverse "snatch", but a more refined ZF system on the Leganza avoids that.

Determined to provide

Audi A3, Rover 200 and BMW in a cocktail of styles.

In a head-to-head, the Nubira is probably not up to the more advanced standards of arch rival Hyundai's Accent, but Leganza is markedly ahead of the opposition's Sonata. It is the Leganza, larger and most upmarket of the three models, which is considered as an entree into the smaller company fleets on a specification for price basis.

THE SUCCESS of the company's European marketing strategy so far is undeniable. With its friendly showrooms, featuring computer displays and crèches, its comprehensive servicing arrangements, long warranties and deliberate fostering of its own second-hand market it has made a huge impact within less than three years.

In the recent J.D. Power survey of customer sati-

faction, although it was the first time the marque was eligible for inclusion.

Dave Sargent, Power's director of European operations, said Daewoo very nearly received an award in its first year in the study. The cars were rated almost as highly as industry leaders and customers are extremely satisfied with how they are looked after.

The study is based on experiences of more than 16,500 readers who responded to a questionnaire in Top Gear magazine. It takes into account performance, mileage covered, reliability, treatment by dealers and compares them against the original expectation of buyers to come up with an index based on satisfaction.

Pricing will be the key to success of the new models in Britain. With 20,000 sales last year, Daewoo is intent on overtaking Hyundai by add-

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